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Faith in Action for Social Justice

Resistance and Healing

by Jim Wallis

Keeping the Faith in Trump's America

by Brittany Packnett

Nadia Bolz-Weber

Lynne Hybels

José Humphreys

Kathy Khang

Joe Roos

PLUS: White evangelicals swing the election

Pentecostalism and social change

Anxious nationalism in the gospel of Matthew

Bob Dylan's Nobel Prize for the rest of us

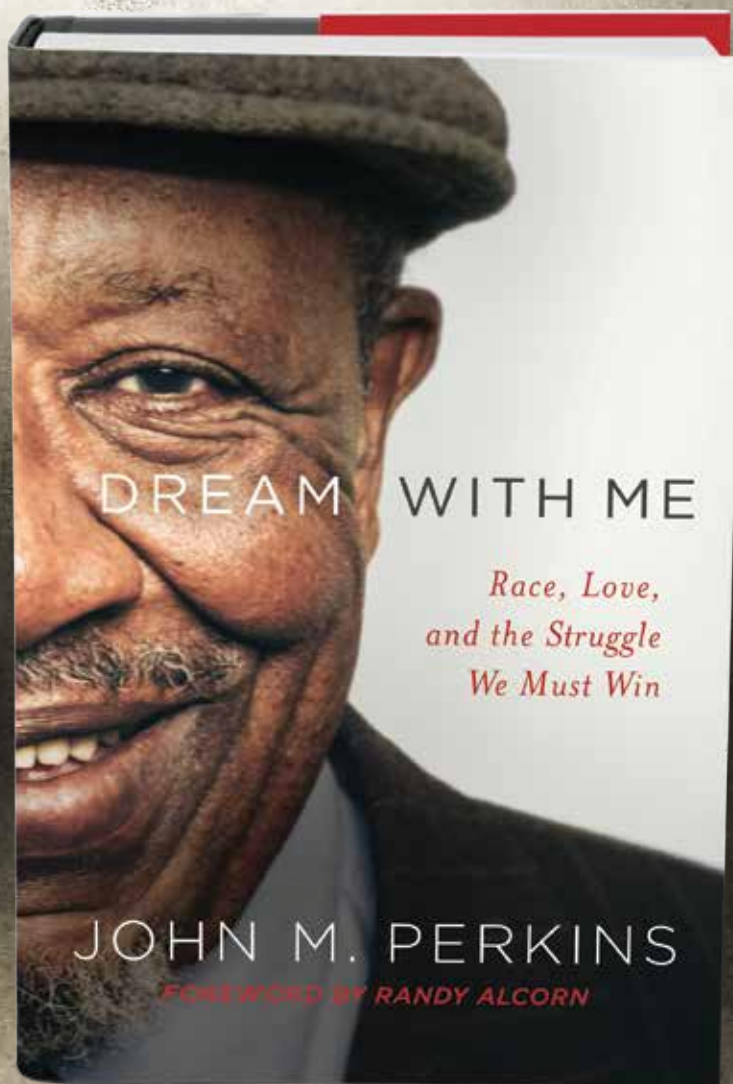


THE LIFE, LEGACY, AND LESSONS OF A CIVIL RIGHTS GIANT

JOHN M. PERKINS
*has been there
from the beginning.*

Raised by his sharecropping grandparents, Perkins fled Mississippi in 1946 after his brother was fatally shot by a police officer. He led voter registration efforts in the 1950s, worked for school desegregation in the 1960s, and was imprisoned and tortured in 1970. Through it all, he has remained determined to seek justice and reconciliation based in Christ's redemptive work.

Dream with Me is his look back at a life devoted to seeking justice for all God's people, as well as a look forward to what he sees as a potentially historic breakthrough for people of every race.





14



26



30

sojo

contents

JANUARY 2017 Vol. 46 | No. 1

COVER

14 Resistance and Healing

The church must stand in solidarity with those who are most fearful—and speak truth to power.

by **Jim Wallis**

PLUS: Keeping the faith in Trump's America, by Brittany Packnett, Nadia Bolz-Weber, Lynne Hybels, José Humphreys, Kathy Khang, and Joe Roos

FEATURES

22 The Return of the King

The gospel of Matthew and the age of anxious nationalism.

by **Robert R. Beck**

26 Is America Possible?

The Trump victory exposes the fault lines in the American Dream.

by **Heath W. Carter**

30 When the Spirit Comes Down

Why Pentecostalism is becoming a global force for social change.

by **Wonsuk Ma**

PLUS: Pentecostal action in Zambia, Serbia, Burkina Faso, India, and Bolivia

CULTURE WATCH

40 Carrie Newcomer's songs of grit and hope

Reviews: *A Pursued Justice*; *The Long Loneliness* in Baltimore; *Viking Economics*

42 Eyes & Ears, by Danny Duncan Collum

43 On Film, by Gareth Higgins

COMMENTARY

8 Glimpses of hope

9 Obama and Israel

10 Challenging Big Pharma

DEPARTMENTS

5 Letters

12 Homepage

47 Poetry

48 Living the Word

by **Jason Byassee**

COLUMNS

7 Hearts & Minds

by **Jim Wallis**

29 Marginalia

by **Catherine Woodiwiss**

39 Moving Mountains

by **Lisa Sharon Harper**

50 H'rumpths

by **Ed Spivey Jr.**



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WE ADMIT IT. We'd planned this issue of *Sojourners* to be a celebration of the first woman president, a look back at the suffrage movement that won (white) women the vote, and yardsticks for holding the new president accountable on key policies.

Then, just days before our deadline, Donald Trump won the election. As Christians we find ourselves needing to reassess. Is this a time to roll up our sleeves and build bridges with whomever sits in the Oval Office? Or is this a time to awaken Christians to our "grave responsibility to protest clearly and forcibly against trends that lead inevitably to crimes which the church deplores and condemns," as Thomas Merton once wrote.

One thing is clear. With white evangelicals and Catholics voting in such large numbers for a candidate who, as historian

Heath Carter describes in this issue, "articulated a virulently racist, misogynistic, ethnocentric brand of nationalism," something is wrong with our Christian confession. We'll say it plainly: The principles, methods, and policies of white nationalism are incompatible with the message of Christ.

In this issue's cover package, we asked a few Christian leaders to explain the best ways for followers of Jesus to resist actions—by the president-elect, his administration, or those emboldened by his rhetoric—that promote white nationalism, nativism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, misogyny, or homophobia. And the responses we received, though varied, have



a common theme: Christians must stand in solidarity with the vulnerable. Now and always.

This issue also includes articles that were written well before the election but now seem especially prescient, including a Bible study about what Matthew's gospel

means in an age of uneasy nationalism and an interview with singer-songwriter Carrie Newcomer. "Sometimes we have to gather with trusted folks—individuals and community—and gather your hope and gather your courage and remember what it is we love beyond words and measure," says Newcomer in the interview. "Then go out and keep trying." ■

Letters

BINARY, SCHMINARY

As a Caucasian who is passionate about race reconciliation, I was over-the-moon thrilled when I read the piece by Kathy Khang, "Opting Out of the Black-White Binary," in the November 2016 issue. I have long advocated to move beyond the black-white binary, as it excludes so many others from entering the conversation or sharing their own struggles and experiences with racism. I can't wait to share this with others or read the book she co-authored! **Shanna Seyer**
via email

NEW LIFE, OLD PROBLEMS

The fact that only 20 percent of the members of Congress are women should be understood as evidence that women are not seen as intelligent and as capable of wise judgment as men ("Welcome to Post-Sexist America," by Jim Rice, November 2016). Women possess intelligence and judgment because they are, like men, human persons.

A post-sexist America would reflect this truth in the make-up of our governing body. However, a post-sexist America would also be called upon to recognize and support women in the aspect of their humanity which men do not share—women's ability to carry and give birth to new life. Yet in this matter America is woefully remiss. The

Love maximizes both life and freedom.

United States ranks 61st in maternal health. The risk of maternal death is higher here than in any developed country. We rank 29th in infant mortality—behind Cuba. While seven babies out of 1,000 live births die by the age of 5 in America, only three babies out of 1,000 live births die in Singapore. Surely, these figures would change dramatically in a post-sexist America.

Tesse Hartigan Donnelly
Oak Park, Illinois

WHY NOT PRO-LOVE?

David Gushee's article ("The Abortion Impasse," November 2016) suggests that "reducing demand" for abortions is the only meaningful path forward for us. Perhaps we can expedite this as a people by reminding ourselves that the *summum bonum*, or "highest good," as far as Christian ethics has been able to articulate it, is love. Not life. Not freedom. Love. The problem love recognizes is that to choose life or freedom sometimes means death to someone. Love maximizes both life and freedom and will also sacrifice both for love. We can only be "pro-choice" and "pro-life" by being "pro-love."

Graham Hutchins
Port Angeles, Washington

GOD'S HEART FOR JUSTICE

Thank you for having the courage to print Brandon Wrencher's November 2016 "Living the Word." I'm a 73-year-old white lady who didn't begin to understand God's heart for the poor, the oppressed, and justice until I was in my 40s. For about 20 years now, I've been sojourning mostly with black Christians, under black pastoral leadership, and studying a plethora of books by black authors. In the lives of my black friends I have seen the truths that Pastor Wrencher has brought to light. I'm praying that I can better articulate his concepts to my white brothers and sisters.

Carol Aucamp
St. Louis, Missouri

Clarification: The 1963 encyclical "Peace on Earth" was from Pope John XXIII, not from the Second Vatican Council as we stated in our December issue.

And now, what say you? Write to letters@sojo.net or Letters, *Sojourners*, 408 C Street NE, Washington, DC 20002. Include your name, city, and state. Letters may be edited.

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BY JIM WALLIS

White Evangelicals and the Election



AFTER A LONG and extraordinarily toxic election, white people elected Donald Trump president of the United States. They weren't the only ones voting, but the white vote—coupled with efforts to suppress minority voters along with diminished enthusiasm and turnout among all voters—was enough to make the difference. After beginning his political career with a racist birther campaign against the first black president, then starting his presidential campaign with a speech that viciously denigrated Mexicans and immigrants, Donald Trump won the election not in spite of but because of his bigotry.

One of the important moral discussions that will take place over the coming months is around the questions “Who did evangelicals vote

differences between older white evangelicals and a new generation of multiethnic evangelical leaders and what they care about.

One sign of progress is that when the media discuss religious voting preferences, they are now more likely to use the phrase “white evangelicals” as a category rather than assuming that the term “evangelicals” applies only to white people.

In fact, we have seen that somewhere between 24 percent and 37 percent of evangelical Christians in this country are not white—and when they are left out of the conversation, it erases the voices of tens of millions of people, many of whom prioritize different issues in the voting booth than do white evangelicals, despite their shared beliefs in the lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of scripture.

These evangelicals of color have stood up and spoken out—along with some white evangelicals who believe that abortion and gay marriage do not supersede all other political issues.

DURING THE 2016 presidential election cycle, the vast majority of white evangelicals acted more white than evangelical, putting their white identities ahead of their Christian identities, and choosing their identities as Republicans over their identities as Christians. They prioritized the strategic idol of a conservative Supreme Court and were willing to look the other way not only on their candidate's bigotry but his shocking lack of personal morality. When the videotape emerged of Donald Trump bragging about adultery and sexual assault, some white evangelicals initially said “enough.” But in the end, the votes of white evangelicals demonstrated the truth as many of them came back to the Republican

candidate—including 75 percent of white evangelical women. Because of this politicizing of the term “evangelical,” many younger evangelicals no longer are comfortable using the word to identify themselves.

The early October declaration by evangelicals against Trump and the release of the Access Hollywood tape the same week did create space for national media to examine more carefully their conceptions of who evangelicals are and how they vote. A few weeks before the election, a poll from LifeWay found that 65 percent of white evangelicals—but only 15 percent of nonwhite evangelicals—planned to vote for Trump. Data from exit polls only heightened this gap, showing that Trump ultimately received 81 percent of the white evangelical vote.

WHERE DO WE go from here? The next generation of evangelicals, like the population as a whole, is more racially diverse than ever. The issues of concern to these evangelicals include supporting alternatives to abortion, but also include racial justice and healing, criminal justice, immigration reform, LGBTQ equality, creation care, reducing poverty and income inequality, and peacemaking.

White evangelicals have been exposed as hypocrites for sacrificing their morals in this election at the altar of power, but their numbers are shrinking each year. It will be up to a new, multiracial generation of evangelicals to chart a new course for their part of the Body of Christ as we look to the future. And indeed, that new and multiethnic generation will actually redefine the word “evangelical” and its meaning in the public square. With God's help, I'm following their lead as we go forward. ■

Jim Wallis is editor-in-chief of Sojourners magazine.

White evangelicals have been exposed as hypocrites for sacrificing their morals at the altar of power.

for in 2016, and why?” White evangelicals overwhelmingly supported Trump, but evangelicals of color did not. In light of these results, we need to step back and ask much-more-basic questions, such as “What is an evangelical?” “What do evangelicals look like?” and “What issues motivate evangelical voters?” The answers are more complicated and more encouraging than what the media and pollsters have traditionally described and what the votes of white evangelicals in this election painfully showed.

In 2016, the conversation about who evangelicals are and what issues motivate them began to change. An influential declaration signed by 80 racially diverse evangelical leaders focused on their rejection of the racial and gender bigotry of Trump. It clarified the fundamental



By Joyce Hollyday

Glimpses of Hope in the Ruins

What truth and reconciliation commissions can teach post-election America.

ON ELECTION DAY, Pulitzer Prize-winning *Washington Post* reporter Mary Jordan suggested that we may need “a Reconciliation Commission, starting as soon as the results come in—no matter who wins.” In this troubling national moment, stories gleaned from historic truth and reconciliation processes can offer glimpses of hope and guide us forward.

A boy named Free Spirit was only 4 years old when he was wrenched away from his family and forced into a Canadian residential school. A nun gave him a new pair of shoes, which he plunged into a sink filled with water. He was shocked by the beating he received. His Algonquin people always soaked their new moccasins and chewed on them to soften the leather.

Decades later, during Canada’s 2011 Truth and Reconciliation hearings in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Free Spirit joined scores of witnesses who shared their stories of suffering in schools whose purpose was to annihilate their culture. Each evening, all the tissues used to capture the day’s tears were gathered and released into the Sacred Fire that burned outside. There they mingled with ashes that had been carried from previous hearings in other cities.

In the United States, the first large-scale truth and reconciliation process was launched in Greensboro, N.C., in 2005. Its focus was the 1979 Greensboro Massacre, in which members of the Ku Klux Klan and American Nazi Party opened fire on march-

‘You have already lost!’ Tutu thundered. ‘Come and join the winning side.’

ers demanding economic and racial justice, killing five and wounding 10.

As the hearings opened, Gorrell Pierce, who was the Grand Dragon of the Federated Knights of the KKK in 1979, strode in with a cadre of young white men. African-American community activist and pastor Nelson Johnson, who was wounded in the attack and lost five of his closest friends that day, immediately stood. He walked across the auditorium and made his way down that row of men, shaking every hand and thanking them for coming. Nelson admitted later that it wasn’t his first impulse, but that as a Christian he knew he needed to bring his best self to that encounter and try to reach out to the best self within Pierce.

When I made my first visit to South Africa in 1988, that country was torn apart by violence and under a state of emergency, with thousands of anti-apartheid activists in prison or exile. Virtually everyone believed that apartheid would

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endure for generations. In a packed cathedral surrounded by riot police, Archbishop Desmond Tutu called his enemies “God’s children too” whose “humanity is caught up in our humanity.” Addressing the defenders of apartheid, Tutu thundered his hope: “You have already lost! ... Come and join the winning side.”

Within six years a freed Nelson Mandela was South Africa’s first black president. Three years later, I returned to observe a stunning and unprecedented truth and reconciliation process. Let us not forget: Miracles happen.

Canada’s Halifax hearings culminated in a birthday party for the survivors of residential schools, who as children never had

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their birthdays acknowledged. Laughter and tears flowed freely as we shared a thousand cupcakes topped with candles and together sang "Happy Birthday" in Mi'kmaq, Innu, Inuktitut, Tlingit, French, and English.

So if you're tempted to hide in a corner and give in to despair now that the election

is over, I'd say throw a party instead. Celebrate the strength that is forged amid challenge and the hope that is reborn in ashes. ■

Joyce Hollyday (joycehollyday.com) is the author of several books and a founding co-pastor of Circle of Mercy in Asheville, N.C.

By James J. Zogby

Saving Israel from Itself

President Obama gave Israel the biggest military package ever—and he didn't even get a thank-you card.

IN SEPTEMBER, President Obama signed a new 10-year agreement with Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu committing a total of \$38 billion in military assistance.

President Obama noted that this—the most significant support package ever offered to Israel—demonstrated his unparalleled commitment to that state's security. Shortly thereafter, Obama, speaking before the U.N., cautioned Israel that it "cannot permanently occupy and settle Palestinian land." The two messages combined made the point that the U.S. can help to protect Israel from external foes, but if Israel wants to be protected from internal challenges, it must change its behavior vis-a-vis the Palestinians.

Just a few weeks later, Netanyahu announced that he was building new settlement units in colonies deep in the West Bank and maintaining ongoing plans to expand settlements in other sensitive areas of the occupied lands—in Arab areas of Jerusalem, in the heart of Hebron, and around Bethlehem.

These are clear provocations and together point to Israel's intention to maintain its control over the West Bank, making impossible the establishment of a viable Palestinian state.

The Obama administration reacted harshly to the Israeli move. A White House spokesperson noted that every U.S. administration since 1967 has opposed settlements in the occupied lands, the expansion of which will only further frustrate a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The White House also accused Netanyahu of violating his commitment to the U.S. that he would refrain from any



President Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu

further settlement expansion. The State Department "strongly condemned" the Israeli plan, referring to the expansion as yet "another step toward cementing a one-state reality of perpetual occupation."

Israel's plans should not have been a surprise, since Netanyahu has been playing the administration for almost eight years. The Israeli prime minister has boasted before Israeli audiences that he knows how to control the U.S. Three times he used invitations to address the U.S. Congress to stymie the goals of the president—succeeding twice. The one time he lost (on the Iran deal), he was rewarded with the \$38 billion arms agreement.

Netanyahu acts with impunity precisely because there has been no accountability for his behavior. The White House and State Department may cry foul, issuing strong statements. But Netanyahu knows that it will end there—with no price to be paid for bad behavior.

As long as the U.S. allows this pattern to continue, the spoiled child will take advantage of the situation—taunting, acting out, and getting his way.

From the Archives

January 2009

Dear President Obama

WHILE Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would be enormously proud of the strides our nation has made over the past 40 years, especially the country's inspiring and groundbreaking election of our first black president, he would be calling on the president, the Congress, and all of us to mount a national, multiracial campaign to free the 36.5 million Americans of all races and places from the noose of poverty driven by low-wage work and to end racial disparities still prevalent in all areas of American life.

Today there are 36.5 million poor people in America, including 13 million children, although our gross domestic product is three times larger than in 1968. He would be pushing our new leaders, and all of us, to achieve long overdue health care for all, beginning with all children and pregnant women; to end the "Cradle to Prison Pipeline" that will afflict 1 in 3 black and 1 in 6 Latino boys born in 2001 unless we act together with urgency to dismantle it; to expand proven parent-child support programs and establish a high-quality comprehensive early childhood development system ...

We know what to do to end poverty, child illiteracy, and hunger and to ensure every child and person health coverage and job-rich, safe communities. Finding the spiritual and political will to do what is right and economically sensible and necessary is the challenge you and I and our new leaders face. ■

Marian Wright Edelman was president of the Children's Defense Fund when this article appeared.



This administration, like those before it, has argued that its hands are tied—that Congress will undercut or overrule it. But in the closing days of his term in office, President Obama has an opportunity to set things right. He can restate the 1970s State Department finding (which has never been overturned) that all settlement activity is illegal. He can allow the U.N. Security Council to pass a resolution declaring the illegality of settlements and imposing international sanctions against Israel for its violations of international law. And he can refuse to block an Arab effort to refer the issue to the International Criminal Court.

Israel's lobby will demand that Congress repudiate the administration's effort. But the matter will be out of their hands and in the

court of the international community. A strong signal will be sent to Israel that it cannot continue its oppression of Palestinians and its creeping annexation of the Occupied Territories. And it will empower and embolden Israeli and Palestinian peace forces.

Finally, such decisiveness will help to salvage President Obama's legacy in the Middle East. He could be remembered as the president who provided unprecedented security assistance for Israel while also putting his foot down and making that state's rogue leadership face the international consequences of their self-destructive behavior. ■

James J. Zogby is president of the Arab American Institute in Washington, D.C.

By Fran Quigley

A Deadly Prescription

Opioid addiction isn't the only toxic result of Big Pharma's push for extreme profit.

ARE CLEVERLY branded fishing hats, stuffed animals, and fancy dinners to blame for the raging opioid and heroin epidemic in the U.S.?

Most of us know the breathtaking scope of that epidemic. People are dying of overdoses at a higher rate than ever in our history—nearly 80 deaths every single day. Four of every five heroin users trace their addiction back to prescription painkillers or opioids.

Less well known is the unethical corporate sales and lobbying blitz that helped trigger the epidemic. During the two decades when addiction rates climbed to unprecedented numbers, multiple pharmaceutical companies spent billions of dollars pushing physicians and patients into a downward spiral of painkiller overprescription and abuse.

Corporate painkiller promotions included dinners and junkets for physicians and direct outreach to patients. One company even funded a "pain guide" that cheerfully promoted the life-changing benefits of opioids while citing multiple "disadvantages" of over-the-counter medications such as ibuprofen. At the same time, the industry was using insider ties to rewrite the medical guidelines that justified

the rash of prescriptions.

The efforts paid off. In 2010 alone, physicians wrote 254 million prescriptions for opioids, and pharmaceutical corporations raked in \$11 billion in opioid sales.

Multiple companies are culpable, but the most high-profile effort was Purdue Pharma's promotion of OxyContin. Purdue's marketing centered on the claim, embossed on its complementary fishing hats and plush toys, that each dose of the drug provided 12 hours of relief. The lengthy duration was the factor that distinguished OxyContin from other, cheaper alternatives.

Unfortunately, for many patients, the drug's effects did not actually last that long, according to multiple clinical trials, patient experiences, and physician reports. When OxyContin's effects wore off before the next scheduled dose, it created desperate patients—and what one neuropharmacologist calls "the perfect recipe for addiction." In one New York county, for example, between 1996 and 2011 opioid pill use increased 1,136 percent and heroin use rose 425 percent.

But Purdue Pharma resisted any efforts to have the drug prescribed for more frequent doses, noting in panicky internal memos that any discussion of the drug's

effect lasting less than 12 hours undermined its market niche. In 2007, Purdue Pharma executives admitted to felony fraud in their OxyContin promotions, paying fines of \$634 million.

This is not just an aberrant company, and the opioid addiction is far from being the only toxic reaction to our for-profit pharmaceutical model. In areas from mental health to cancer, our current system is rife with examples of fraudulent promotions, unethical marketing to physicians, and corruption of patient advocacy groups and researchers. The industry has responded to the skyrocketing incidences of opioid overdoses with 1,500-percent increases in the cost of medicines used to respond to them. All from an industry that is routinely given monopoly patents on medicines discovered with government funding—medicines that are then sold back to taxpayers and government programs at take-it-or-leave-it pricing.

Political leaders, including President-elect Trump, have vowed to confront the industry's excesses. In November, the pharmaceutical industry was forced to spend more than \$125 million in California to fight off the first in what is likely to be a series of ballot measures to curb medicine prices.

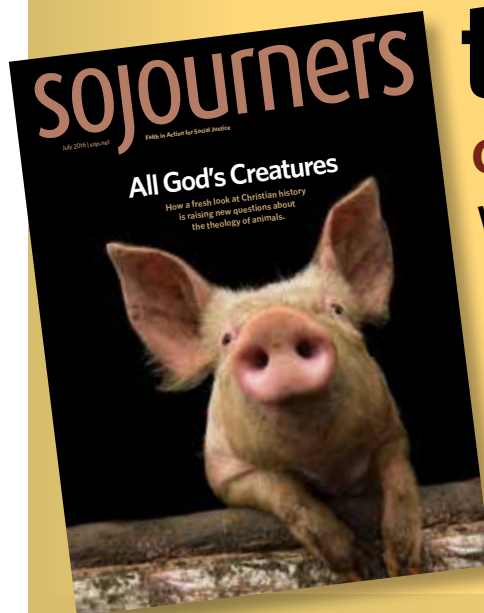
While the chief cause of the opioid epidemic may not be branded fishing hats, it's hard to argue with the culpability of the profit-seeking medicines system those hats represent.

It doesn't have to be this way. For generations, medicines were treated as a public good, considered off-limits for profiteering and monopolies that block cheaper generic alternatives. Even today, government dollars still undergird the entire medicines industry, providing the opportunity to pursue multiple alternative models that control prices while still funding innovative medical research.

It is time for people of faith to write a different prescription for our medicines system. ■

Fran Quigley, author of A Prescription for Change (Cornell University Press, 2017), is director of the Health and Human Rights Clinic at Indiana University McKinney School of Law and coordinator of People of Faith for Access to Medicines (pfamrx.org).

No animals were harmed in making this cover



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VIDEO



JP Keenan

'This is the fruit of the sin of the church'

When asked why Christians should care about the crude oil pipeline threatening the Standing Rock Sioux reservation and its water supply, Mark Charles had an answer. "This is the fruit of the sin of the church," he explained, citing the ways that the U.S. church has been complicit in systemic destruction of native people. Charles invited Christians to join in a process of lament. "Hear what's been done on behalf of the church, what's been done on behalf of American peoples," he told Sojourners. "The way it's been minimizing, dehumanizing native peoples so that the economy can grow, so that gas can be put in our cars."

See more at sojo.net/pipelinedc.

QUOTED

“Generations later, I reside on this stolen land and live a life that cannot preserve and sustain the earth.”
—Lindsey Paris-Lopez
 on being a descendant of white Christians who sought to exterminate native peoples
sojo.net/lessons

ENVIRONMENT

Timeline of a Pipeline

After the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers controversially granted permits for the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline—permits the Standing Rock Sioux say were granted without their permission—the tribe filed a lawsuit and began nonviolent protests. For the most recent updates on the protests against the Dakota Access pipeline, visit sojo.net.

AUG. 12: Protests led by the Standing Rock Sioux block access to pipeline construction sites in North Dakota.



AUG. 24: 300 people stand in solidarity outside as the U.S. District Court in D.C. begins hearing the tribe's lawsuit.

SEPT. 4: Private security officers for Energy Transfer Partners are recorded threatening to sic their guard dogs on the demonstrators.

SEPT. 9: A federal judge denies the tribe's efforts to stop the pipeline, but the U.S. Army and the U.S. Departments of Justice and the Interior provisionally suspend the pipeline's construction.

MID-SEPT.: An estimated 8,000 people, from 280 Native American tribes, join the land-defense movement.

OCT. 27: Police aggressively disperse and arrest 141 pipeline demonstrators (while the seven armed militants who took over a wildlife refuge in Oregon in early 2016 are acquitted).



NOV. 3: More than 500 interfaith clergy leaders join native land-defenders in North Dakota.

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RESiSTANCE A



In the wake of the devastating election, the church must stand in solidarity with those who are most fearful—and speak truth to power • by JIM WALLIS

Where must we start as Christians and faithful churches after such a devastating election that brings the most dangerous man to the White House that we have seen in our lifetimes?

First, many people are terribly afraid, because they are from groups who were attacked and targeted in the campaign by the new president-elect. We must take those attacks seriously by reaching out in solidarity and protection to those who are now most vulnerable—undocumented immigrants, black and brown Americans, Muslims, women of all races, and LGBTQ folks. Members of these groups have already experienced ugly incidents of hate and violence, including increased harassment, vandalism, and even assaults on children and others in the wake of the election results. If I read my scriptures right, those are the people that Christians and other people of good conscience should now turn to in solidarity and support. That is what Christians are supposed to do: Support the poor, the vulnerable, and those under attack.



Kevin Lamarque/Reuters

Demonstrators across the country, including at this Nov. 9 vigil at the White House, protested Trump's hateful words and actions.

AND HEALING



RESISTANCE

Second, we must make it very clear that honest and prophetic truth-telling about race in America will be needed as never before in our time, especially from white Christians. The fact that a majority of white Americans, at every level of class and gender, voted for a candidate who ran on racial and gender bigotry is even more distressing when we see that a majority of white Christians voted just like other white voters. And it is revealing that those who say this election was not about race are white, while Christians of color see race at the center of it. Repentance by white Christians in America will require the replacement of the white

those who can speak for the faith community or, especially, for people of color in the body of Christ.

I have received countless calls since Election Day from people who feel very vulnerable. Parents of young black and brown children are afraid for their kids and struggle with what to tell them. African-American ministers fear what emboldened white police officers might do to their young people if they no longer have to worry about the scrutiny of the Justice Department, the president, or anyone else who might hold them accountable.

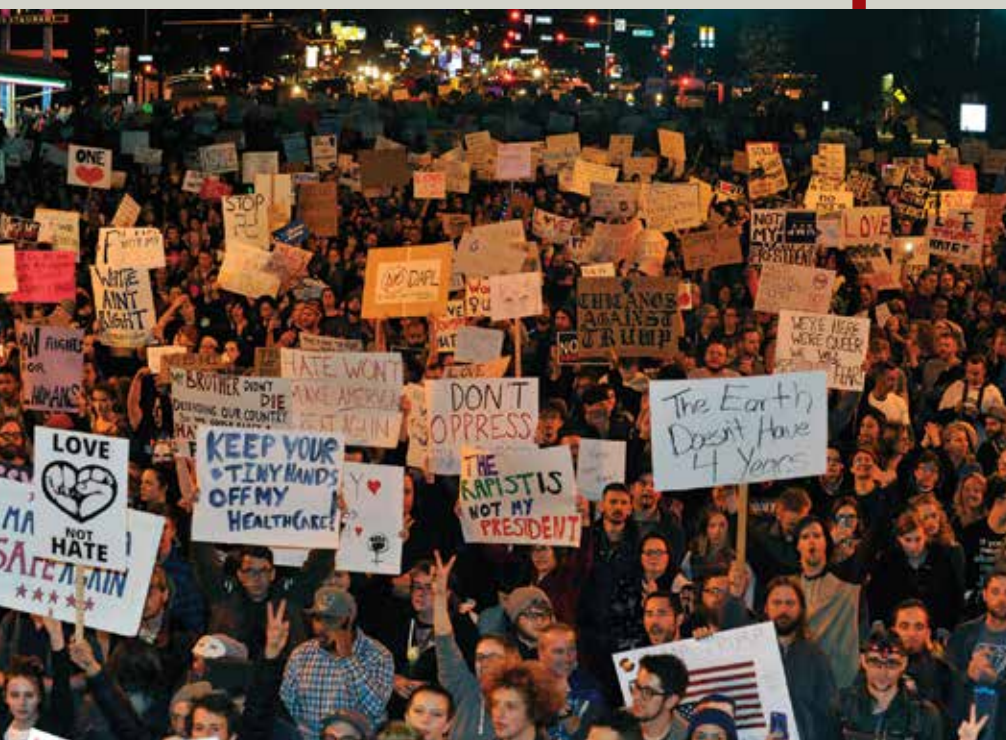
More than 700,000 young Latino/a students and

workers, who were protected from deportation by President Obama's executive orders, know that these could be overturned with the stroke of a pen. Latino pastors are dealing with the millions of undocumented families who are terrified of losing family members and are going underground. And many of our Muslim neighbors are wondering whether this can be a country for them anymore.

Practical acts of solidarity

As we move forward into the Trump administration, our acts of solidarity must be very practical. Let me call for two actions in support of those most under attack. First, I believe churches may need to open themselves up as sanctuaries, taking in the undocumented immigrants whom Donald Trump has pledged to deport. If Trump follows through on the promises he has made to deport more than 11 million people, I believe massive civil disobedience may be called for. We have the capacity and the opportunity to open up our churches, seminaries, and schools to "the strangers" that God asked us to protect, and to force immigration enforcement police to arrest immigrants inside our churches instead of taking them alone at home.

Second, if the federal government and its agencies will not protect young people of color from the violence of racial profiling, then religious communities, denominational leaders, local pastors, and congregations will need to do so. It is time to call for meetings—both for dialogue and accountability—with local sheriffs and law enforcement officials. Let's take them the report of The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, ask them to read it, and promise to come back to discuss how to implement its practical and sensible recommendations.



Demonstrators on the streets of Denver after the election.

identity politics that dominated this election with faith identity politics.

One of the saddest aspects of the election for me is the fact that most white evangelicals voted for a man whose life has embodied the most sinful and shameful worship of money, sex, and power and who represents the very worst of what American culture has become.

And it was a real tragedy that we did not hear from many of America's most famous white megachurch pastors in this election. Religious Right leaders, who supported Trump despite all their previously expressed religious values, showed incredible hypocrisy and once and for all revealed themselves as political operatives more than religious leaders. They should be understood simply as political operatives for the Far Right and not as

Jason Connolly/Getty Images

AND HEALING

If the appropriate government officials at the federal level under the Trump administration will not hold law enforcement accountable for obeying the law with all their citizens of every color, then ecumenical and inter-faith agencies of our cities and towns will need to take up that role. We will need to tell officials that if they don't hold their officers accountable, then we in our local faith communities will.

And Christians, in particular, will need to defend and protect Muslims in America, who are our fellow citizens and people of faith, as well as guard against an upsurge in anti-Semitism. Religious liberty means nothing unless it is extended to all religions.

Going deeper into our faith

All this will be risky and costly. Thus it will be important that our first call is to go deeper into our faith, to find the courage to act, to stand alongside those who are under attack, and to confront the principalities and powers.

Perhaps the most encouraging calls to me since the

White Christians must call for the replacement of white identity politics with faith identity politics.

election have come from young people of all ethnicities, many whom I know well and have mentored. Several have said without prompting, "I just wanted you to know that I am in for whatever this will require of us." Thanks be to God.

At Sojourners, we will be in for whatever it takes to stand with our brothers and sisters under attack, to offer our resistance to the racial bigotry and misogyny that the new president-elect ran on, to call churches away from that bigotry and back to the miracle of the multi-ethnic body of Christ that we celebrate around the world, to nurture our own children in a faith that unites and doesn't divide, and to recommit ourselves to love, care for, and sustain each other as we embark on a new moment in our mission.

Going forward, there will be a great need for healing. For that to be possible, we must listen to each other more deeply than ever. Our congregations must become safe spaces for that kind of listening across many lines.

In the wake of this election, the role of faith communities is imperative—for prayer, discernment, speaking and standing up, solidarity and support for those most fearful right now, and for speaking truth to power. Our call and our ministry, in such a time as this, will be for faith, resistance, and healing. ■

Jim Wallis is editor-in-chief of Sojourners magazine.

Resistance is Holy Work

by Brittany Packnett

RESISTANCE IS HOLY WORK. Resistance is what it means to tell the truth and defend people in public, even—and especially—when it is inconvenient, dangerous, and uncomfortable.

What truths must we tell? We must tell the truth that the entire world is not white, straight, Christian, cis-gendered, American-born, male, or able-bodied, and that those of us who aren't matter just as much as those of us who are. We must tell the truth that rhetoric and policies that encourage violence against those same people is not of God and not of the freedom we espouse. We must tell the truth that if all of us were truly created equal, then the cancer of xenophobia makes all of us sick—and that none of us are truly free until we are all free.

We did not lose an election as much as we validated and normalized a way of life that is beneath our humanity—and, therefore, which requires our resistance. The Christ I serve did not sit idly by in times like these—for in eras like this one, inaction is a sin. Inaction perpetuates this latest wave of hate just as much as if you painted a swastika yourself. Hate should never be welcome in our homes, at our tables, in our worship, or in our country.

It is holy to resist such things. Holy resistance means calling out that hate by name and casting it out of where you are—of where you want God to be. Casting it out means no longer making excuses that your grandfather just talks like that because he is elderly; it means withholding your tithes and membership from those places that will not be safe havens and sanctuaries for those persecuted under potential new rules of law; it means challenging the notion that we stitch together a false unity rather than acknowledge the explicit danger many of us are now placed in.

Holy resistance means praying for those who persecute—but protecting the persecuted. Christians must be people of moral conscience, those who conscientiously object to hatred, division, racism, and sexism as unashamedly as we claim Christ. The call to be in the world and not of it was for such a time as this—we must be the light that shines on injustice and calls out our humanity to replace the evil we see.

Resistance is holy work. That makes it our work. ■

Brittany Packnett is an activist, educator, and organizer from St. Louis, Mo., and vice president of national community alliances for Teach For America.

RESiSTANCE

The Strong Heart of God's People

by Nadia Bolz-Weber

THIS IS APOCALYPTIC, in the truest sense of the word (meaning, a “revealing”). We live in the same country we did before the election, but the ugliness is just less hidden.

But something else is also being revealed, and that's the strong heart of God's people. People who place more hope in The Kingdom than in The Government. People who will stand with the vulnerable. People who will love harder.

People who have been swept up into the radical reconciliation and mercy of a crucified and risen God and who will use that, and not the results of an election, to determine what we believe, who we consider worthy, what is worth paying attention to, what we value, and in whom we place our trust.

The Kingdom of God has always grown strong in challenging times, and I believe with everything in me that it will do so now as well. May it be so. ■

*Nadia Bolz-Weber is the founding pastor of House for All Sinners and Saints in Denver and the author, most recently, of *Accidental Saints: Finding God in All the Wrong People*.*



Carlo Allegri/Reuters

Connecting the Disinherited

by José Humphreys

AS A CITY CHURCH LEADER, I realize it's important for us to rest our sights and our engagement locally while building bridges with our more distant neighbors. Issues such as immigration, punitive policing, and the diminishment of the middle class are expressed in our own backyards.

What will it require for those of us who suffer from the malady of middle-class aloofness to build bridges with those who have been disinherited in their own neighborhoods and will be under the threat of further disinheritance under the administration to come? How can we bridge the divides between the urban and rural poor?

Some years ago I supervised a seminary intern who had done organizing and pastoral work in Appalachia and other rural areas. He opened my eyes about abject poverty in rural contexts. He even helped some of us city dwellers plant a garden in East Harlem. Through planting together, sharing laughs, and telling stories, many of us developed a new perspective on rural poverty. And the intern learned what poverty looked like in gentrifying Harlem.

We were all able to better understand what Martin Luther King saw in trying to unite poor people all over the country through the Poor People's Campaign. That kind of engagement with the unsanitized dreams of Dr. King will be essential in the months ahead. ■

José Humphreys, a faith organizer, is pastor of Metro Hope Covenant Church, a multiethnic church movement in East Harlem, N.Y.

Above, a demonstrator at a pro-immigrant rally in Manhattan.

AND HEALING

A Deeper Walk of Solidarity

by Lynne Hybels

MUCH OF MY GLOBAL work is with people of peace in the Holy Land—Israelis and Palestinians who refuse to view the other as enemies, who listen to those with whom they disagree in an authentic attempt to understand, who refuse to give in to hopelessness, and who recommit themselves daily to equal human rights and the common flourishing of all Jews and Arabs in the land.

Theirs are the voices in my head since the election as I ponder what shape my actions should take in the months and years to come. On one hand, it will require humbly listening to the majority of evangelicals who voted differently from me, listening for the sake of understanding and empathy, which is the beginning of healing.

On the other hand, it will require a truer and deeper walk of solidarity with vulnerable minorities who—if campaign promises and threats are carried out—will become tragically more vulnerable. I know I will have to rely on the profound power in repentance, forgiveness, deep listening, careful speaking, and humility. ■

Lynne Hybels, co-founder of Willow Creek Community Church in Illinois, is author of Nice Girls Don't Change the World.



Reuters

Resistance Takes Action

by Kathy Khang

I HAVE NEVER HAD A HANGOVER, but I think this is the closest I want to come to one. With that in mind, I want to educate myself and challenge my fellow Jesus-followers to do the same. We don't have to hold our collective breath for the next four years. There are small steps we can take, starting now.

Give each other (especially Muslims, people of color, etc.) plenty of space to grieve, heal, and recharge. I don't care if it's December or 2017. Some white people just woke up to a reality the rest of us have been living and screaming and dying about, and you are still trying to figure out how to make sure people know you're not in the 81 percent of white evangelicals who voted for he-whose-name-I-still-cannot-utter-without-swearing. It doesn't matter. You need to give me, my husband, my

We need to demand that our pastors preach about the sin of racism. We need to recognize this is not politics as usual.

daughter, and my sons space to grieve. You can take action without waiting for me to thank you for not being one of "those" white people.

Don't make a call to "unity" before you issue some apologies. Don't do it on social media. Don't do it from the pulpit. Don't say it out loud.

Educate ourselves about where local, state, and national leaders are and are not taking action. We need to hold them accountable as well as keep ourselves informed and in conversation with our neighbors about what is happening locally and nationally. I might even attend a local government meeting or two wearing a shirt that proclaims "Black Lives Matter" or "Nasty Woman" or "Lord, Give Me The Confidence of a Mediocre White Man."

Speak up and speak out, knowing fully we may risk friendships and polite family gatherings. When we hear something that stinks of racism, privilege, white supremacy, white nationalism, or misogyny, we need to stop it and correct it, whether it's something we hear on the playground or in church. We need to have the courage and the conviction to step in when we see or hear something and stop being silent observers. We need to ask and then demand that our pastors preach about the sin of racism. We need to recognize this is not politics as usual.

We need to find ways to use our bodies and voices to be present and speak out for the marginalized. Put ourselves physically in between people in public altercations. Say something to our pastor or parent or co-worker or boss if we hear them say something that normalizes racism and white nationalism. Write letters to and call our politicians and denominational leaders. Financially support justice work. March if we can march.

Resistance takes action. ■

Kathy Khang, co-author of More than Serving Tea, is a writer, speaker, and coffee-drinker in the north suburbs of Chicago.

RESISTANCE AND HEALING



My Pledge of Resistance

by Joe Roos

DEAR PRESIDENT-ELECT TRUMP: I am a white, 70-year-old pastor from California. As a follower of Jesus, I seek the path of inclusion, justice, peacemaking, and love. Your campaign was dominantly about exclusion, inequality, the use of violence, and hatred of the other. I will follow Jesus, and not you.

Jesus spent his entire life living with and caring for the poor and the marginalized. He was once himself an immigrant and a refugee. And he strongly opposed and repeatedly confronted the political, economic, and religious elite of his day, people like you.

If you pursue the policies you embodied during your campaign—the supremacy of white people over people of color, the literal and figurative creation of walls of division and hostility between people and nations, a misogynistic attitude and practice toward women, disdain for the poor, disabled, and marginalized, disregard for and ignorance about the environment, and encouragement

of the use of violence toward those who disagree with you—if your policies as president continue down that path, I make this pledge of resistance to you today:

I will oppose you and stand against you every day of your presidency, following the example of Jesus of Nazareth, seeking peace, pursuing justice, and living nonviolently, including actions of nonviolent civil disobedience against you.

That is my promise. ■

Joe Roos, a former publisher of Sojourners, is a Mennonite pastor in California.

Jesus spent his entire life living with and caring for the poor and the marginalized.



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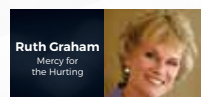
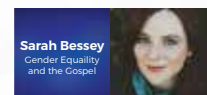
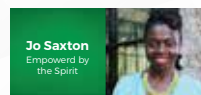
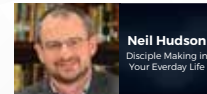
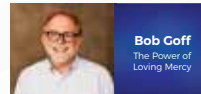
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Congress Returns with a New Look



Like the writer of Matthew's gospel,
we witness cultural anxiety on the part
of many who feel their heritage is
being lost or diminished.

A man in a denim vest and bandana is holding a large American flag. He is looking down and to the left. The background shows a highway overpass and a black SUV. The sky is blue with some clouds.

The Return of the King

What the gospel of Matthew offers us in an age of anxious nationalism.

A Bible study • by ROBERT R. BECK

IN THIS NEW LITURGICAL YEAR, the lectionary's gospel readings are drawn from the book of Matthew, a story of the Messiah's return. Matthew was a Jewish follower of Jesus living in the aftermath of the first Jewish revolt against Roman rule. The revolt, which lasted from 66 to 70 C.E., was not successful and ended with the Roman burning of Jerusalem and its temple, the very center of the Jewish world. One era of Jewish history ended, another opened up.

For some Jews, the destruction of the temple fueled their struggle against Rome, and they continued their hopeless revolt. For others—the successors of the Pharisees who led the early rabbinic movement—the fall of Jerusalem prompted them to craft a new Judaism based on the Book, instead of the temple. But Matthew's gospel, the story of Jesus' life and his collected teachings, offers a third option, based neither on revolt nor rabbinic tradition.

Anti-immigration
demonstrators on a
highway overpass
outside Murrieta, Calif.

Photo by Sandy Huffaker/Reuters

A background image featuring the red and white stripes of the American flag on the left, transitioning into a blue field with a white chain-link fence pattern on the right.

Matthew characterizes this cultural narrative

Roman reprisals after the uprising included the “Fiscus Judaicus”—a punitive tax levied on all Jews, male and female, free and slave, throughout the empire. The proceeds supported the Jupiter temple in Rome, dedicated to the deity that Rome considered responsible for the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. Humiliation was piled upon profound loss, inspiring virulent Jewish nationalism and rebellions around the Mediterranean basin. But all of the rebellions—led by Jews in Libya, Cyrene, Cyprus, and Egypt—were ruthlessly shut down by the Roman army. A final Jewish rebellion in Jerusalem gave the Emperor Hadrian an excuse to initiate a full-scale assault on Jerusalem and the villages of Judea. The results were decisive: The territory was depopulated and failed to recover.

Writing as a Jewish Christian, Matthew offered an alternative to this nationalist violence: the nonretaliatory teaching of Jesus. For instance, in his account of the temptations in the desert, Matthew concludes with Satan testing Jesus with a vision of the world’s kingdoms. “All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me” (Matthew 4:9). Here is a vision of empire, introduced into the imaginations of the time by the military success of Rome. But instead, Matthew shows Jesus, the Messiah-king, rejecting the option of empire, while linking that choice to another—servitude to Satan.

Rivals, not enemies

Matthew’s animosity toward the Pharisees has often fueled speculation about Matthew being anti-Jewish. But once we recognize his post-temple situation, we understand that this Jewish Christian writer was vying for the future of Judaism. In the rivalry between Jesus and the Pharisees of Matthew’s narrative, we detect a reflection of Matthew’s own rivalry with the early rabbinic movement. But this tension in Matthew’s gospel depicts a rivalry between siblings with competing proposals for God’s people, not a drama of good against evil. Moreover, Matthew’s gospel is not a story of Christian victory over Jews, as our Christian tradition has so often and so damagingly characterized it over the course of our history.

As often happens in rivalries over identity—communal, religious, or national—arguments turn on issues of authenticity. In Matthew’s account, Jesus famously called the Pharisees “hypocrites” (23:13-30). And at the end of the gospel, the Pharisees unexpectedly reappear with a request for a guard at the tomb. They characterize Jesus as an “impostor” who not only claimed to be messiah—the first imposture—but also claimed to rise again, an imposture they think “would be worse than the first” (27:62-65). Both hypocrites and impostors are pretenders, inauthentic claimants to the true identity. Matthew frames the struggle

between Jesus and his opponents as competing claims to be authentic heirs of the ancient promises to Israel.

This competition about Israel’s authentic heirs is why Matthew appeals to the deep origins of the Jewish faith, often describing Jesus as a new Moses and establishing Jesus as the messianic Son of David—a claim that was bold and original. In a deft move, Matthew identifies the authentic heir to the promises, places the messianic claim in the context of the Judean history of exile and foreign occupation, and offers a rationale for the failure of Judea to recognize the coming of the true king. He does so by placing the story of Jesus up against a common cultural narrative.

A tale as old as time

It all begins in the infancy narrative. Unlike Luke’s Christmas story, which brings the family to Bethlehem only for the birth of Jesus, Matthew presents them as Bethlehem residents. Their lives are disrupted when the Magi arrive in Jerusalem and jumpstart the action of Matthew’s drama.

Thus begins a chain of events as Herod, alerted to the possibility of a rival, causes the family to flee. Their attempt to return is frustrated, since Herod’s replacement, Archelaus, proves as great a threat. The family turns then to a town in more distant Galilee, Nazareth, making its first appearance in this gospel. We learn nothing about Nazareth from Matthew, for his interests lie elsewhere. Upon reaching adulthood, Jesus leaves Nazareth to begin his mission. This will take him to Jerusalem, to the territory from which he was banished. But now he returns as messiah-king. His arrival is marked with a picture of a city amazed and questioning, echoing the arrival of the Magi in the city at the beginning (2:1-5; 21:10-11). A circle is closed.

With the addition of this series of events, Matthew evokes a popular and enduring story formula, as old as the tales of the Greek heroes and the biblical stories of Joseph and Moses, and as contemporary as *The Lion King*. A young prince escapes a coup against his royal family, but survives in obscurity. At maturity he is discovered to be the true heir, by special signs (such as pulling a sword from a stone), and with no other credentials he returns to regain the kingdom from the pretenders who have usurped it. Herod, the face of Rome, represents the imperial usurper, which is for Matthew the history of colonized Judea. In Jesus, the returning Messiah, true kingship itself returns, lost perhaps since the Babylonian exile, and most recently counterfeited under Herod.

The many variations of the story pattern have one thing in common, seen clearly in famous examples such as Odysseus and Hamlet: They end in a moment of comprehensive revenge. No trace of the corrupting influence is spared this vengeance. Matthew, however,

of retribution as inherently unstable.

characterizes this cultural narrative of retribution as inherently unstable. In the parable of the great feast, we hear of the fate of a city that fails to adopt Jesus' program (22:7). In this regard, Matthew's narrative of Jesus culminates in a refusal to retaliate. At the garden arrest we hear: "Put your sword back into its sheath, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (26:52). Jesus' alternative vision is seen in the insistence on unconditional forgiveness, 70 times seven, unlike the 77-fold revenge of Lamech (Genesis 4:24). And, of course, it is seen in the Sermon on the Mount, with its invitation to turn the other cheek, and to love one's enemies—a teaching concluding with the call to "be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (5:48).

But what about divine retribution?

But as soon as we introduce the idea of God as non-violent, we come to a problem: Matthew's theme of divine retribution. It emerges in his portrait of John the Baptist, whose initial preaching features axes lying at the roots of trees, winnowing forks in hands, and forests reduced to deserts—all emphatic symbolism of "de-cision," a "cutting away." And John's harsh note of impending judgment is echoed by Jesus.

Or so at first. Matthew shows Jesus gradually tempering the expectations that John has aroused. Two significant episodes, featured during Advent, illustrate this vividly. Though John's initial preaching favored images of forests reduced to deserts, when John sends from prison to inquire whether Jesus is the one who is expected, he is answered by quotations from Isaiah that picture the renewal of Israel as one of healing and reforesting the deserts. A change in direction is indicated.

In the parables we see most clearly how Jesus has redirected John's promise. In the parable of the wheat and weeds (13:24-30), we learn that the threatened judgment is deferred indefinitely, to the end-times. Furthermore, the harvesting is not to be assumed by the disciples; it is to be left to God, who tends the fiery furnace "where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth."

And there is the crux of the matter. Is Matthew's God nonviolent? Or does God insist that the disciples of Jesus be nonviolent, while retribution remains a divine prerogative only? Matthew seems to want it both ways, confusing us. Perhaps recalling the circumstances of Matthew's day might again offer some insight. For while this gospel insists that Jesus' policy of nonretaliation offers the only realistic response to the turmoil of the times, it will not do to draw from this the conclusion that God is not just, that God is not paying attention to the dreadful turmoil unfolding. Matthew employs the language available to him, that of divine

retribution, to argue God's justice, even while insisting that nonviolence remains the only realistic position that will allow them to survive, even prevail.

Nationalism, then and now

The perspectives opened up by this larger picture of Matthew's story of Jesus allow fresh connections with what is happening in our own time, with our own struggles. We, too, live in an age when the impulses of a desperate nationalism suggest violent solutions. One of the expressions of our anxieties is a culture of overt violence, with the open display of firearms on the part of angry citizens, with almost daily reports of violent assaults on public gatherings. A yearning for force and the strong hand of suppression builds in response. Matthew faced a similar climate.

We live in a culture that finds forgiveness unthinkable, even subversive. When people at a church Bible study become the targets of a mass killing, their willingness to forgive disturbs others. Voices cry out that it is a violation of justice, and cannot be tolerated. Matthew's message of forgiveness also encountered a nonreceptive setting.

We live in a time when familiar traditions, even faith itself, seem threatened. We witness cultural anxiety on the part of many who feel their heritage is being lost or diminished in an increasingly global society. Matthew points to a peace beyond our familiar customs.

We also are drawn to disputes about what best represents the authentic life. Here in the U.S., we are tempted to assign blame to outlier groups, maybe Muslims or Mexicans. Matthew's community endured similar tensions, and his gospel makes a case for rootedness in the long tradition. Reflecting a crisis of identity, the gospel features a language of authenticity grounded in forgiveness and the rejection of vengeance.

In his own time of nationalist violence, Matthew offered an alternative for the Jewish community, one necessary but outrageous—the nonretaliatory teaching of Jesus. In our own cultural atmosphere of barely controlled violence, it remains as outrageous, and as necessary, as then. ■

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Does God insist that the disciples of Jesus be nonviolent, while retribution remains a divine prerogative?



Those of us who possess great privilege need to accept our responsibility to both love our enemies *and* stand with the oppressed.

Is America Possible?

**The Trump victory exposes the fault line in the American Dream—
and in American families • by HEATH W. CARTER**

My grandparents supported Trump.

Their simple white house sits on the sprawling plateau between Joplin and Springfield, Mo., just around a bend in the country road where their church stands. It's not more than a mile from the old farm, where my grandpa raised chickens and tilled the soil until his body would no longer allow it, as the man who owned the land had promised he could. To me, he's always been Papa, but in that remote part of the Ozarks he's known as the "chicken man," a name in which he delights.

Papa has never been a very good businessperson. When at first he went to sell the fruits of his labor, he would put out a can and ask people to pay what they could. Eventually he fixed prices to things, but when the woman who was raising her grandchildren alone would show up, she knew that whatever she could spare was enough. "Don't try to outgive the Lord, because you can't," Papa told me on countless occasions. In order to make ends meet, he used to work at the nearby quarry. Now he cares for the church building next door and, in exchange, the congregation lets him and grandma live in the house.

When I was in high school, I spent part of a summer on the farm, where I learned all sorts of things firsthand: that picking okra is sticky work, that spiders have an unfortunate affinity for tomato plants, and that unvarnished racism is still acceptable

in certain quarters. It was the first and only time I remember meeting my great-grandma. She brought her new husband, Joe, with her, and at one point in the conversation he made clear he was not happy about the "Oreo cookie" families moving into the area. Still to this day, if you bring Joe up in the presence of my grandma, she'll tell you she never truly accepted her mother's last beau. He was too "mean."

My own mother grew up in this world, but I've never been more than an interloper, and so it took some time for me to see that the darkness was not just out there in the likes of Joe but was also deeply entrenched in my own extended family. As a child, I never noticed that the village in northwestern Missouri where my paternal great-grandparents long operated a store had no black residents. As of 2010, it still did not. I was dumbfounded when, in my early 20s, I learned that one of my great uncles was hoping for a revival of the Klan in his corner of the state.

In the years after we got married, my wife and I made a number of trips from Chicago to visit Papa's kin in southern Indiana. As young urban professionals, we were something of a curiosity to my cousins, but they never failed to treat us like royalty, planning large family get-togethers while we were there and sending us home with jars of homemade strawberry preserves.

Despite our many differences, we found

RJ Sangosti/Getty Images



A Trump supporter
at a rally in Denver.

plenty—and at times, too much—to talk about. The last time we were there together, we found ourselves in a heated debate about the biblical view of interracial marriage. One of my cousins broke rank and confessed that she, too, worried about the prevalence of racism in her midst: In fact, she shared, when a black man had recently walked down the street where she lived, her father had called out to her uncle, in a voice loud enough for the passerby to hear, “Go get the rope.” The next year, my wife and I adopted our eldest son, who is black, and we have not been back since.

Understanding the Trump phenomenon

My extended family is hardly representative of all Trump supporters. Trump had a strong appeal among voters earning more than \$50,000. He fared better with Latino, African-American, and Asian-American voters than Romney did in 2012. But there is no question that Hillary Clinton, on the other hand, failed to generate enthusiasm among poor and working-class white voters.

The Trump phenomenon has sent elites on both coasts and around the world scurrying to understand who these people are and what precisely is motivating their revolt against the establishment. Many have found their answers in a book by J.D. Vance titled *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*, which shot to the top of the bestseller charts earlier this year. More recently, it was featured in a *New York Times* piece titled “6 Books to Help Understand Trump’s Win.” But the truth is that, while Vance’s book is a good read, it does not help us to understand the fundamental dynamics underlying Trump’s victory.

Most of *Hillbilly Elegy* is devoted to tales of what it was like for Vance to grow up in poor, white communities in Kentucky and Ohio. One comes to know and love his rough-hewn Mamaw and Papaw, grandparents who turned out to be more like parents to him. In their younger days they had a volatile relationship. Vance recounts how, one night when Papaw came home drunk, knowing full well that Mamaw had threatened to kill him if he didn’t break the habit, she poured gasoline over his sleeping body and dropped a lit match on his chest. But by the time Vance entered the picture, they

Grandma, Papa, and the rest are swimming in turbulent currents that are not of their own making.

were a stabilizing force amid the ups-and-downs of life, with a mother who struggled with addiction and went through men like cases of cigarettes. Vance is a strong writer and his willingness to be brutally honest about his family’s travails, which he sets against a broader Appalachian backdrop, makes for a riveting narrative.

But when *Hillbilly Elegy* moves beyond the personal to the prescriptive, it falls flat. While Vance pinpoints some of Appalachia’s problems—poverty, unemployment, drug addiction, despair, and more—he does not truly understand from whence they came. Historians have written voluminously about intertwined stories of labor, race, religion, radicalism, business, environment, and more, and collectively this body of work underscores the major structural factors that have contributed to the region’s distinctive struggles and that help to explain its openness to a candidate like Trump. Earlier this year a group of publicly engaged historians pulled together “Trump Syllabus 2.0,” an invaluable guide to some of this literature. If you want to understand how we’ve arrived this moment, there’s no better starting place.

Swimming in turbulent currents

Had Vance stuck to memoir, then he might have credibly ignored this scholarship. But he aspires to more. Both in the book and in his broader cultural commentary, he outlines a way forward that stresses the importance of people’s choices and the need for communities to come together, in addition to a handful of minor policy recommendations. This approach is insufficient, at best, because it underestimates the deep structural roots of injustice. The worlds of the Ozarks and Appalachia may seem simple. But they have been no less shaped by the grand forces of our age than have New York and Chicago.

At this precarious juncture we must not lose sight of the past, nor of the larger systems and structures that impinge, whether we notice them or not, on all of our lives. Grandma, Papa, and the rest are swimming in turbulent currents that are not of

their own making and to which *Hillbilly Elegy* is an inadequate guide. If we’re going to achieve a more just United States, then we must become better oriented to those currents even as we forge

broader movements for structural change.

But if we’re going to be successful on that last front, then we do need to hear Vance out on one vital point: namely, that the temptation to demonize the white working class must be resisted. As I write, he is among those urging greater empathy. Others are insisting that, given the tenor of the president-elect’s campaign, not to mention his electoral triumph, we must focus our energies on protecting the vulnerable. The truth is that those of us who possess great privilege need to accept our responsibility to do both: love our enemies and stand with the oppressed.

There is no getting around the fact that, whatever the complex nature of their motivations, those who cast ballots for Trump threw their collective weight behind a candidate who has variously indulged and articulated a virulently racist, misogynistic, ethnocentric brand of American nationalism. The full consequences of their endorsement remain to be seen, though already there are signs that extremists have been emboldened.

Even so, we must recognize that if we choose to label all Trump voters racist, misogynist, ethnocentric nationalists and to withdraw back into our silos, we will foreclose any chance they could be persuaded to join our movements for justice. We must be resolute in joining hands with those who are vulnerable and, at the same time, we must find winsome ways to engage—yes, even love—our cultural enemies.

The burden of this engagement should not fall equally on us all. But as a white, middle-class Christian man, I consider myself very much on the hook. I am not ready to bring my son to a family gathering in southern Indiana. But if he’s going to inherit a better country than I have, it might be time for me to schedule another visit. ■

Heath W. Carter is a historian at Valparaiso University and the author of *Union Made: Working People and the Rise of Social Christianity in Chicago*.

Entering My 'Power Decade'

IT IS A TRUTH universally acknowledged that a woman turning 30 must be in fear of her age. When I was 27, I got an accelerated peek into the process—I was in a bad car accident, and the recovery left me temporarily reliant on the trappings of old age: breathing apparatuses, a mostly liquid diet, walking with a cane.

I managed to weather it with good humor, knowing most of the changes were temporary (who hasn't dreamt of shaking her cane from a porch at noisy youths below?). Now, back in my "correct" age, I'm grateful for that behind-the-scenes trial run at the other end of things. To be young and healthy again is a relief. But I'm now not afraid of aging, either.

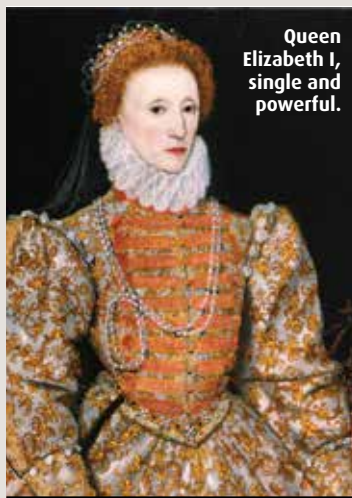
I turn 30 this month. To be, at 30, unmarried, childless, career still evolving, and *happy* about it, as I am, is still viewed with suspi-

To be a 30-year-old unmarried woman is still cause for suspicion.

cion, especially for women. While we've mostly divorced specific ages from expected signifiers of "adulthood"—marriage, children, home ownership, defined career—there's still an underlying social expectation for women and men alike: Your 30s are when you "settle down."

But my brief sojourn into old age didn't give me a craving for these trappings of thirtyness. Instead, this visit to the end of the line gave me a deep look into my own soul. I did not emerge from enforced solitude in my later 20s looking to lock down a career and a man. I *did* emerge eager to honor my soul's boundaries, newly curious about the divine, insistently pulled toward creating spaces of peace and healing for others.

Now that the chronological



experience of life has been scrambled and the expected scripts tossed out, crossing over into 30 feels like the beginning of some real fun.

One of my editorial colleagues at Sojourners refers to a woman's 30s as a "power decade." ("I wasn't standing in the light when I was turning 30, but I could see that there WAS light," she told me. "The crises of the 20s were resolving into some sense of identity, of growth. ... And a bit of the satisfaction of survival.") In fact, most of my over-30 writer and editor colleagues at Sojourners have shared a common sentiment: Our 30s are (or were) *so much better* than our 20s.

Ann Friedman keeps notes on women whose careers took off in their 30s (Alice Munro, Margaret Atwood, Dorothy Parker ...). Yet socially our horizons are often still unfairly confined to starting a family or, "as a substitute," throwing ourselves fully into a career. "We are constantly given one-size-fits-all recipes, but those recipes fail, often and hard," writes Rebecca Solnit in a beautiful essay in *Harper's* on being a writer and a woman over 30.

I've become particularly interested in what aging means for women, I think,



because there are so few models for it. If having a family is not on my radar, by choice or by circumstance, what other experiences and growth can I look forward to?

For this I've found myself turning to the saints. There is a long litany of women who died martyrs for refusing marriage—and others whose insight was so in touch with the divine that they took up governance, medicine, poetry, interpretations of visions. When I hear the phrase "women in the church," I think first of these women—those who devoted themselves to the quest of divine love in all its communal forms, social conventions be damned. To me, they are the model of a life lovingly and furiously lived.

"That we want is enduring; what we want changes as culture does," wrote Kate Bolick in her memorable 2011 treatise to singlehood, "All the Single Ladies," in *The Atlantic*. "This is not to question romantic love itself. Rather, we could stand to examine the ways in which we think about love."

I think of Elizabeth I, founder of the Anglican Church, a single woman who used her charm and power to peacefully unite a violent country. I watch stories of women like *Grace & Frankie*, a serial celebration of 60-something retirees building friendship and community in a new act of life. I listen to women—grandmothers, mentors, sisters, role models—whose lives, so different from mine, have been driven by similar affection for others—for justice, for health, for human flourishing.

The way we think about love matters. As I step into my 30s, I'm more ready than ever to learn how. ■

Catherine Woodiwiss is Sojourners' senior associate web editor.

National Portrait Gallery, London





When the Spirit Comes Down

Why Pentecostalism is becoming a force for social change
around the world • *by* WONSUK MA

Worshippers in downtown
Brasília, Brazil.

Photo by Joedson Alves/Reuters



When The Spirit Comes Down

In 1906, a few hundred people were present at Azusa Street Mission revivals in Los Angeles, which are regarded as the beginning of modern Pentecostalism. A century later, Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity claims about half a billion adherents worldwide.

Around the world, where work for change is happening, it's often Pentecostals in the middle of it.

For example, Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, two scholars based at the University of Southern California, examined flourishing churches in the global South that were involved in social issues (churches that were indigenous to their areas—that is, not reliant on foreign resources). To the surprise of Miller and Yamamori, authors of *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*, 85 percent of them were Pentecostal and Charismatic churches.

What motivates these churches to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty in serving their neighbors? Is it poor economic conditions? If the answer is related to context, why are these Pentecostal churches more engaged and proactive than their Catholic or Protestant counterparts?

There are several key Pentecostal beliefs that encourage response to social challenges:

1) Called: God touches us!

The Pentecostal movement is best characterized by personal experiences with God. Often supernatural in nature, these encounters with God are described as “crisis experiences,” and they tend to revolutionize the believer’s faith,

attitude, behavior, and life.

For example, the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Korea publishes *Shinang-gye* (World of Faith), a popular monthly magazine that features testimonies of divine healings and miracles. Such testimonies affect others and reinforce a key value among Pentecostals: Most human problems are spiritual at their core.

This assumption has significant implications. First, in Pentecostal worship such an encounter with God is expected, encouraged, and facilitated. Songs, preaching, prayer, altar call, and other components of Pentecostal worship lead worshippers to enter into a “holy ground” where one meets the loving and powerful God. This makes Pentecostal worship dynamic and vibrant.

Second, such experiences powerfully influence believers’ attitude toward themselves, work, family, and God, often making them more positive and proactive in their outlook. Third, remembering their own past and dramatic experiences, they tend to reach out to those who struggle with life issues. Pentecostals are generally eager to share their experiences of God.

Circles of Hope for Tackling AIDS

Northmead Assembly of God Church in Lusaka, Zambia, is just like any other megachurch in the world's megacities. About 1,500 worshippers gather for each of the two Sunday worship services. The music is emotionally uplifting, and Bishop Joshua Banda's roaring preaching barely keeps members of the audience in their seats. Frequent amens and hallelujahs compete with the preacher's increasing excitement. In every way, this is a typical Pentecostal church with a good dose of American influence and African traditional religious fervors.

However, this Pentecostal church also operates the Circle of Hope AIDS clinic. More people come here for HIV testing than to most government-run clinics, according to Banda, a sure sign of trust in this shame-oriented culture.

In the early 1990s, Bishop Banda didn't think AIDS was an issue for his congregation. He was busy with preaching and evangelizing. According to census data, in 1985 the number of people infected

with HIV in Zambia was about 36,000. By 1990, that number had jumped to nearly 300,000, and within five years it had doubled again. The AIDS

pandemic threatened Zambia's future.

Soon Banda was hit hard by the realization that AIDS was in his church. He became particularly aware of the suffering of widow lay leaders, and he realized if Zambia lost its future generations, there would be no church or mission at all. He set about to drastically change the direction of Northmead's ministry.

Banda mobilized his large congregation's resources to address this threat. Northmead established an intentional "discipleship" track to provide ministry and training for HIV/AIDS patients, their families, and the whole church. Northmead's approach was holistic, covering spiritual, social, communal, educational, and medical assistance.

As many churches began operating small ministries in response to the crisis, they formed the Expanded Church Response to HIV/AIDS task force, with Bishop Banda as the chair. (By 2013, the group had more than 16,000 churches providing high-quality health care to nearly 30,000 people.) In 1999, under the direction of Pastor Gladys Banda, the women of Northmead founded Lazarus Project, a farm to care for and educate AIDS orphans. Then came Operation Paseli, named after the street in front of Northmead, to work with commercial sex workers. In 2003, the church launched the Circle of Hope clinic to provide



free anti-retroviral treatment and community outreach to people living with HIV/AIDS.

Banda was concerned that the Christian response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic should provide a distinctly Christian solution, including marriage fidelity or sexual abstinence as a component—amid other solutions that include male circumcision, condom promotion, and preventing mother-to-child transmission—for preventing the spread of this disease. "A number of church congregations, including our own, now demonstrate in more ways than one that evangelism and social action should not be separated," Banda wrote.

Eventually Banda was invited to lead Zambia's national AIDS program. "What Africa is battling with in the face of the AIDS pandemic is the notion which we could term lightly as a seeming 'covenant with death' (Isaiah 28:15)—obviously at serious variance with the essence of our gospel message," wrote Banda. "Our spiritual resources are mightier than the 'strongholds' posed by HIV/AIDS (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)."

Over the past 20 years, Zambia has made tremendous advancements in "halting and beginning to reverse" the AIDS epidemic, according to a 2015 report submitted by Zambia to the U.N. The report chronicled "a drop in the HIV transmission rate from mother to child from 24 percent in 2009 to less than 9 percent in 2014."

Banda, who led Zambia's national AIDS council for nearly a decade, was the main architect of the effective national AIDS policies, which were deeply rooted in Christian principles. The expansion of Bishop Banda's HIV/AIDS work owes much to patients and families spreading their stories by word of mouth. The name Circle of Hope has been adopted by church ministries across Zambia working for and among people with HIV/AIDS.

Banda has regularly shared his experiences with his counterparts across southern Africa. Thousands, if not millions, have been positively affected by this Pentecostal work. —Wonsuk Ma

The Northmead Assembly of God congregation offering prayers for the health of mothers and children.

Photo courtesy
Child Health Now

Lusaka ZAMBIA



When The Spirit Comes Down

An Outburst of Roma Pentecostalism

Excited and nervous on his first day of high school in Leskovac, Serbia, Saša Bakić waited his turn to introduce himself. After he said his name, his new teacher stopped him: “Are you Roma?” she asked. “Let’s make a deal—if you don’t skip school and stay quiet in class, I will pass you with a D.” Stunned and humiliated, Saša tried to protest amidst the class’s laughter, only to be told, “You are all the same.”

The history of the Roma—Europe’s largest minority—is pockmarked with stories of forced assimilation, enslavement, and even attempted genocide during WWII. Today, despite efforts of state and EU policy toward integration, many Roma in Eastern Europe are still mired in systemic poverty and social stigma.

The steady growth of Roma Pentecostalism in Europe, however, is another narrative challenging these sobering realities.

When Saša began attending church at age 8, he received a message of acceptance and encouragement. “The children’s sermons acknowledged that we were outcasts, but that we should love rather than hate,” he remembered, now working to complete his bachelor’s in theology. “The church told us, ‘Let’s make a better image of our community!’”

Pentecostalism is helping Romani people establish their identities in changing social contexts. Scholars have argued various theories to explain the success of Roma Pentecostalism, but many Roma Christians testify that a new identity—being a child of God—emboldens a new confidence in being Roma. Significantly, studies in various contexts have shown that the spread of Pentecostalism in Roma communities is linked to social change, including rising education levels and a decrease in crime, and such visible change legitimizes the church as a medium through which to engage the wider society.

A Pentecostal revival began in Leskovac in the early 1990s, and there are now an estimated 1,000 Christians out of the 8,000 to 10,000 Roma. The resulting positive social impact has improved the

Continued on Page 36

Here’s another example: Jashil Choi International Fasting and Prayer Mountain is located close to the heavily fortified border between South and North Korea. Buses deliver thousands of people from around Korea; almost everyone holds a black Bible and bags of bedding and toiletries. They are not here for a camping experience, but for prayer and fasting. People gather several times a day in a large sanctuary for prayer and worship, but the real action takes place in countless tiny prayer cells, where cell leaders—often women who have had

Pentecostals fully believe that social action begins with a personal experience of God’s grace and power.

a profound experience of God’s spirit—invite others overwhelmed by life’s challenges to come to the “prayer mountain.” For some, the most significant aspect of this movement of prayer and transformation is its grassroots nature.

Another story of this kind of Pentecostal transformation is found among the harshly marginalized Roma people in Ireland, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere in Europe. In recent years, the Roma have begun to embrace Pentecostalism—particularly through the indigenous Roma Life and Light church—and are becoming what some call Europe’s “new moral army,” with noteworthy positive social programs and growing political potential. As Swedish academic David Thurfjell explains, the Roma people do not have a homeland or state, “so the sense of identity is linked to Pentecostalism, and is intertwined with the influence of Romani rights activists. The Pentecostals are a uniting force.” Around one-third of French, Spanish, and Portuguese Roma are Pentecostal Christians, according to journalist Katharine Quarmby, author of *Romani Pilgrims: Europe’s New Moral Force*.

When a mainline church leader once asked a Pentecostal minister whether his church had any social programs, the Pentecostal answered, “We *are* the social program!” Pentecostals fully believe that social action begins with a personal experience of God’s grace and power.

2) Empowered: The Holy Spirit baptizes us!

The modern Pentecostal movement, in its incredible diversity, has recovered for Christianity a strong focus on the Holy Spirit. One doctrinal form of this is “baptism in the Holy Spirit,” distinct from water baptism, in which one is empowered for service. Almost every family of Pentecostalism believes that the Holy Spirit empowers God’s people for bold action.

'Speed Schools' for Women and Girls

Burkina Faso, a small, landlocked country in West Africa, was on the radar of the world media in 2014 when its people rose up to end the 27-year rule of Blaise Compaoré.

A positive outcome of the uprising has been that girls are enrolling in schools at a higher rate than before the ouster, but women's literacy across the country remains very low at 29 percent. Low literacy rates among girls and women is a key factor in keeping Burkina Faso ranked near the bottom of the human development indices.

Part of the problem is a cultural bias that favors males. A secondary problem is early pregnancy that hinders girls from fully accessing education. Several strategic partner organizations started by Pentecostal Christians—including the National Association for Bible Translation and Literacy, the Christian Relief and Development Organization, and



Grant Smith/Works That Work

Ouagadougou BURKINA FASO

my own organization, Evangelical Association for Support and Development—have played a key role in addressing early pregnancy.

These organizations sponsor formal education for both girls and boys in hundreds of schools, but they also have created innovative informal educational opportunities that particularly benefit women and girls. For example, my organization opened gender-balanced “speed schools” in 2006, featuring an accelerated, nine-month curriculum for those with little or no education and those who never went to school in their native language. Following the speed-school term, graduates enter their third or fourth year of primary school.

Many similar initiatives can trace their origins to students trained by Assembly of God missionaries such as Pierre Dupret, who led the first Assembly of God school in Burkina Faso in 1948. Historically, colonialism and other social and economic factors hindered women's education. Today, Pentecostal churches, including the Assembly of God, and other Christian organizations are some of the main sources for promoting education for women in Burkina Faso.

—Philippe Ouedraogo

Philippe Ouedraogo is executive director of Evangelical Association for Support and Development and senior pastor of Boulmiougou Assemblies of God Church in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. He is the author of Female Education and Mission: A Burkina Faso Experience.



The Evangelical Association for Support and Development builds, maintains, and runs several schools in northern Burkina Faso, including Bethel Secondary School, above.



When The Spirit Comes Down

Leskovac, Serbia

Continued from Page 34

relationship between Roma and Serbians. Local schools, for instance, have recognized the Roma Pentecostal church's influence and now do an annual presentation in the church to introduce teachers and facilitate questions. School officials consult with Roma Pastor Šerif Bakić, Saša's uncle, about decisions affecting Roma students. These days, most of the church's youth graduate high school.

Still, Pentecostalism is not some magic button. Due to systemic poverty, transformation is slow and sometimes unnoticeable. Churches are well-established in places such as Bulgaria and Romania, but in other countries they are relatively new and struggling. The economic problems plaguing most of Eastern Europe worsen relations between Roma and non-Roma.

In a time like this, the church can play a key prophetic role, not just in social transformation but also in helping to foster reconciliation between Roma and non-Roma. Pastor Šerif notes: "Only the church—through the power of the love of Christ—represents a positive and life-changing voice."

And this change is seen one life at a time. On his last day of class, Saša showed his teacher his good grades in all classes. "She was speechless," he remembered. "I then told her I forgave her and shared the gospel with her." —**Melody J. Wachsmuth**

Melody J. Wachsmuth is a mission researcher in the Balkans, based in Osijek, Croatia.



Clare Kendall

Roma churchgoers in Leskovac, Serbia. In 2013, the gospels were distributed in their language for the first time.

The Spirit baptism becomes a powerful next step, after personal experience of God, in spiritual formation, and it is often accompanied by speaking in tongues. Based on the promise in Acts 1:8 that believers "will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you," Pentecostals believe that this is available for every believer. As Peter's preaching (Acts 2) on the day of Pentecost illustrates, the experience transcends age and gender, as well as social, educational, and even ecclesial status. This new paradigm liberates ministry from a "properly trained few" to every believer.

In many male-dominant cultures, Pentecostal women excel in their leadership and mission engagements. My own Korean Pentecostal mother is a typical example. She struggled to feed and educate five of us, while suffering from a chronic heart disease. Her daily strength came from her deeply committed Christian

In many male-dominant cultures, Pentecostal women excel in leadership and missions.

life in a small Pentecostal church. She had barely completed her own elementary school education because of the Japanese occupation of the Korean peninsula between 1910 and 1945. Our home was always filled with young people from the church. All of them came from non-Christian families. My mother never failed to urge them to continue their studies. Because of her persistent campaign, even against opposition from their families, most of them continued on to their university education. Although never healed of her illness, she was relentless in believing that God can make great things happen.

Her story is rather common in many parts of the global South. For example, in Ethiopia, two of the largest Protestant denominations (with a combined membership of 15 million) adopted Pentecostal beliefs and practices during the communist era and developed an extensive system of private Christian schools run by women that continues today. These women proprietors, often with little education themselves due to poverty, open their garages, sitting rooms, or outdoor spaces to provide education to children of poor families. They have to raise funds, meet ongoing demands, and frequently fight government bureaucracy.

Schools like these are found in almost every part of the world where public education is too expensive for poor families. A strong sense of spiritual empowerment is a driving force for these women.

3) Commissioned: We are story-makers!

Pentecostal theology, born of ordinary people's

The Feeding of 10,000

In Kolkata, India's second largest city, mass poverty affects millions. More than a third of the region's 18 million people live in slums and 70,000 are homeless. Street and slum dwellers in Kolkata are mostly refugees or migrants from rural areas, driven into the city in search of livelihood. Whole families live in fragile shanties, bus shelters, and railway platforms, earning a meager living as rag pickers, petty hawkers, and daily wage workers. Trapped in a vicious poverty cycle, they struggle daily for survival.

But it is also the site of broad-scale social programs rooted in Pentecostal faith.

"First feed our bellies ... then tell us about a God in heaven who loves us!" Decades ago, a hungry beggar flung these words at Mark Buntain, a young missionary-evangelist from North America who, with his wife, Huldah, had come to share the good news of Jesus with the people of Kolkata.

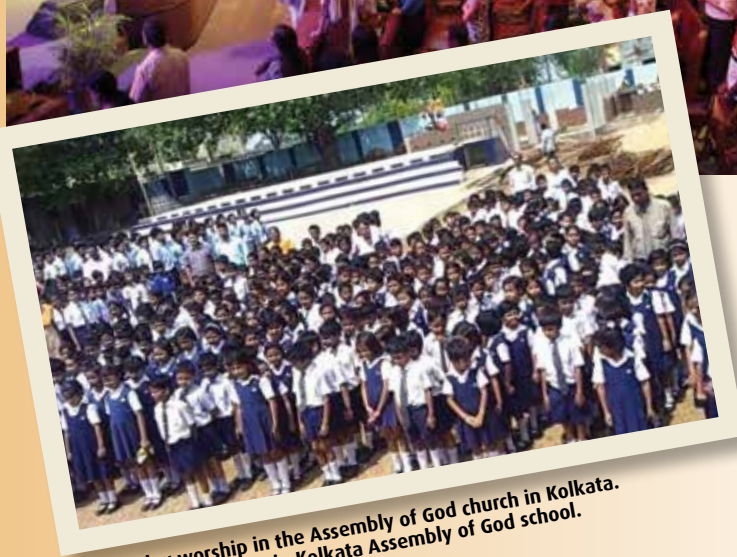
The Buntains were convicted by these words, and the Assembly of God Church they founded 60 years ago launched a social out-

reach program that has served the poor of Kolkata ever since.

The Kolkata Assembly of God Church's theory of change is deeply rooted in the gospel of Christ, with our ultimate goal being fullness of life for all, especially for the poor and marginalized in society. Though our initial response to the poverty trap was a spontaneous attempt to meet immediate needs at the grassroots level, with time we also developed a more studied response geared toward sustainable empowerment.

Programs that continue to serve immediate needs on broad scale today include a feeding program that serves more than 10,000 meals a day in the streets and slums, provision of bio-sand filters for clean drinking water, and free or subsidized basic health care. Long-term interventions include 10 schools where underprivileged children receive a hot midday meal, essential health care, and a basic education. A vocational training school offers a wide range of certified skill-development courses including catering, hospitality, computers, tailoring, and bedside nursing care, with promising job prospects for sustainable livelihood.

This multifaceted approach attacks the evil of poverty at several levels. Its breadth of scope, however, sometimes limits adequate in-depth engagement and our capacity to measure success outcomes with precision. The benefits of the social programs are offered to people of all faiths



Top, Sunday worship in the Assembly of God church in Kolkata. Above, school children in Kolkata Assembly of God school.

unconditionally and are never used as inducement for spiritual conversion. But the power of Christ's love that nourishes and propels the church's social engagement inevitably results in people being drawn to Christ, for which evidence is available in abundance.

"But for the AG School, I would probably have been working by the roadside," says Ranjit, an AG school graduate. His goal now is to be an Indian Administrative Service officer and to open a school where all poor children will have opportunities to fulfill their dreams. Social justice takes on new meaning when Christ's promise of fullness of life is able to fulfill the dreams of a vulnerable and powerless child from the streets of Kolkata.

—Ivan Satyavrata

Ivan Satyavrata is senior pastor of the Assembly of God Church in Kolkata. He is the author of Holy Spirit, Lord and Life Giver (IVP Academic) and God Has Not Left Himself Without Witness (Regnum).



When The Spirit Comes Down

In Christ, No Male and Female

The religious ideas and practices of the Indigenous peoples of Bolivia, primarily Quechua and Aimara, flow like a subterranean stream through the country's dominant Catholicism, particularly in La Paz, the most culturally Indigenous capital city in Latin America.

But evangelical Christianity, brought to Bolivia by European and North American missionaries more than 100 years ago, has also maintained a relationship

with Bolivian culture—and that culture has shaped the church even as evangelicals have increased in numbers and influence.

La Paz BOLIVIA

Evangelical and other Protestant denominations, especially the neo-Pentecostals, have reached out to Aimara Indigenous communities, even while respecting fundamental components of Aimara ethnic identity. Thus while a chauvinism rooted in both national tradition and missionary evangelicalism dominates most male-female relationships in much of Bolivia, within Aimara neo-Pentecostal families, gender relations are more symmetrical.

Partly as a result of these cultural values, Indigenous women play important leadership roles within many neo-Pentecostal churches and organizations. They speak their own language in services and adopt symbols and rituals that come from their own Indigenous identity rather than European Protestant tradition. Whether it is recognized or not by outsiders, the Aimara identity proposes new ways of living and representing the Christian faith. Through the meeting of Aimara culture and neo-Pentecostalism, the assumption of male hierarchy is being questioned and subtly transformed.

—Marcelo Vargas

Marcelo Vargas, with Silvana Vargas, directs the Missionary Training Center in La Paz, Bolivia. He is executive secretary of the Latin American Theological Fraternity.

The assumption of male hierarchy is being questioned and subtly transformed.

experiences, is a grassroots phenomenon. In Burkina Faso, the Catholic Church has about 1.9 million members and the Assemblies of God (a Pentecostal denomination) a little more than half that. But the Pentecostals have almost three times as many local churches than the Catholics do. Pentecostal congregations have reached large cities and small villages throughout the country. In Brazil, Pentecostals have 18 times more clerics per believer than the Catholic Church.

Where does this grassroots orientation come from? For Pentecostals, each believer is a maker of stories of God's marvelous work in their lives. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, they are also story-makers in the lives of others—and, more significantly, they are eager to share these stories. It is story-telling evangelism rooted in music, art, and lively worship.

Pentecostal believers express their theology and stories in songs, prayers, and dances. This makes Pentecostals eager witnesses to God's transformative work. This also explains in part the breadth of Pentecostal growth and the depth of its impact.

Too often Pentecostalism is associated with mass media "prosperity preachers" and a "health and wealth" ideology. These movements, though not dominant, are persistent. Where they flourish, the gospel is poorer and positive social contributions are few.

Pentecostalism is here to stay, and it comes with valuable gifts for the church and the world. But only recently have Pentecostals begun to diligently collect and theologize on their faith and experiences. This is beginning to happen through organizations and institutions such as the Society for Pentecostal Studies and the Pentecostal Theological Seminary in Cleveland, Tenn., through books such as *Good News from Africa: Community Transformation Through the Church*, and through the work of other scholars.

Churches around the world can benefit from Pentecostal strengths while also helping them fulfill their unique calling. The task is simply too great for the church to remain divided. ■

Wonsuk Ma, founder of the Asian Pentecostal Society, is distinguished professor of global Christianity at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Okla.

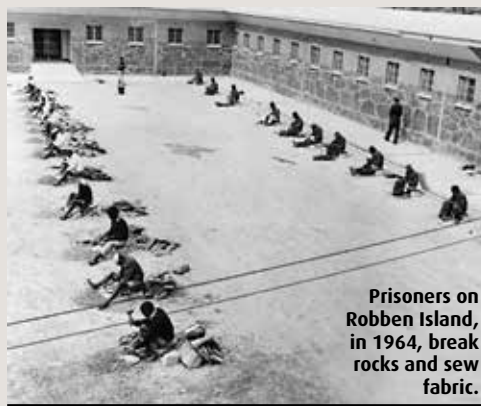
How Shall I Make Expiation?

FAMINE CRACKED the earth, causing children's bellies to swell. Mouths opened wide, babies' heads hung limp over their mothers' arms. For three years no rain fell. Well water became a distant memory for the people of Israel.

David asked God why suffering was overcoming his people. God said: "There is bloodguilt on Saul and on his house, because he put the Gibeonites to death."

Saul was the previous king who tried to wipe out the Gibeonites during his reign—even though Israel had sworn to spare them. What comes next in 2 Samuel 21:1-14 takes my breath away. David calls the Gibeonites to the court and speaks with them directly. He asks them: "What shall I do for you? How shall I make expiation, that you may bless the heritage of the Lord?" (verse 3).

America's 45th president will be held responsible for the decisions made during his administration. But also the physical health of our



Prisoners on Robben Island, in 1964, break rocks and sew fabric.

we could never realize restitution because: How could we determine exactly who owned the land that was stolen? How could we determine exactly who is of indigenous ancestry and who is a more recent immigrant to South Africa? How do we determine how much each family should receive?

These questions are the very ones that cloud the question of reparation in the U.S. They rise like smoke, creating an opaque screen obscuring collective view of justice, rightness, wellness, wholeness, and holiness.

It occurred to me, perhaps these questions are the problem. They immediately address the challenge through the framework of legality. But the problem is not fundamentally a legal one—it is a relational one. Relationship was broken the moment the first European explorers landed on South African shores and determined the people living there were not called by God to exercise dominion on that land. Repair of this relationship requires that we go back to that moment—to recognize the people's right to steward the land, and thus submit to their legitimate authority.

"What do you say that we should do to make things well with you?" we should say. Then the relationship could begin to be repaired.

And the scripture says: "After that, God heeded supplications for the land." This is the first requirement to repair our broken world. ■

Lisa Sharon Harper is chief church engagement officer for Sojourners and author of The Very Good Gospel: How Everything Wrong can be Made Right (June 2016).

The problem is not fundamentally a legal one—it is a relational one.

land and people will reflect the measure to which President-elect Trump faces and corrects his own sins as well as those that past presidents have perpetrated against our citizens and our global neighbors.

David asks the Gibeonites: "What do you say that I should do for you?" Could we imagine our next president calling together a conference of African-American leaders or Native American leaders or Latinx leaders and asking them: "What do you say that we should do for you?" Can you imagine putting that level of power in the hands of the oppressed—power to set the framework for repair?

One year ago, I spent five days on Robben Island investigating the

relationship between forgiveness and justice. There, it occurred to me that the call to black and "colored" South Africans to forgive the atrocities of the Apartheid government was for *their* sake, not the sake of the white South Africans. Forgiveness cut the ties that bound oppressed to oppressor. Forgiveness redirected the prayers of the people to God. Now God needed to restore what had been taken.

But if forgiveness was for the sake of South Africans of color, then what was the message for the white South Africans? Repentance.

I walked back from Mandela's cell with a young man named Nkosi, who lives in a black township and is a part of the Rhodes Must Fall movement of young people demanding the end of South African colonization. I asked Nkosi, "What would repentance look like in your country?" He said, "Restitution."

Restitution is simply the act of restoring what was taken. In South Africa's case, it means restoring the people to the land that was taken from them.

A few days later I sat at the dinner table with a white South African family. When the question of restitution surfaced in our conversation, questions rose and clouded our vision. Suddenly, it seemed





The Good that Still **Abides**

An interview with singer-songwriter Carrie Newcomer.

*I'm inspired and troubled by the stories I have heard.
In the blue light of evening all boundaries get blurred.
And I believe in something better, and that love's the final word,
And that there's still something whole and sacred in the world.*

—“Help in Hard Times,” by Carrie Newcomer

CARRIE NEWCOMER IS a Quaker singer-songwriter whose music is inspired by hope and the great human potential for peaceful coexistence. *The Beautiful Not Yet* is the title of both her newest album (Available Light Records) and an accompanying book of poems, essays, and lyrics. She is also working on a spoken word and music collaboration with Parker J. Palmer (author of *Let Your Life Speak* and *Healing the Heart of Democracy*) called “What We Need Is Here: Hope, Hard Times, and Human Possibility,” which is scheduled to premiere in spring 2017.



Singer-songwriter
Carrie Newcomer

Newcomer lives in southern Indiana when she's not traveling the world singing her folk and gospel-infused tunes and engaging social and environmental justice issues.

She was interviewed for *Sojourners* by John Malkin, a musician, journalist, and radio host in Santa Cruz, Calif., whose books include *Sounds of Freedom: Musicians on Spirituality and Social Change* and *The Only Alternative: Christian Nonviolent Peacemakers in America*.

John Malkin: When did you start making music?

Carrie Newcomer: I picked up a guitar when I was in my early teens and learned

Inside CultureWatch

44 Crafting the Prophetic Voice

Andrew Wilkes reviews
A Pursued Justice

45 The Witness of Radical Welcome

Elizabeth McAlister on *The Long Loneliness in Baltimore*

46 A Not-So-Impossible Dream

Richard K. Taylor reviews
Viking Economics

my first three chords and started writing songs. I've always loved the combination of language and music.

In the liner notes of *The Beautiful Not Yet*, you mention that many of these songs were written on trains and planes. How has travel been a part of your life and music? I wouldn't have been able to live this life of a traveling songwriter for so many years without having a bit of a wanderlust inside. At the same time, I really enjoy when I have time at home. I live out in the middle of the woods in southern Indiana, and I love the feeling of being

Sometimes we have to gather with trusted folks and remember what we love beyond words and measure.

grounded to a particular community and very familiar natural surroundings. It's always been a balance for me to find time at home to feel grounded, to write about the daily and small changes around my home and at the same time to enjoy this love of people and places.

I love seeing that all cultures are rich and deep and unique—how we're different. At the same time, I love the thread that pulls between us. When you sing a song about love or family or a little kindness and hope—particularly hope—it's immediately recognizable anywhere you go.

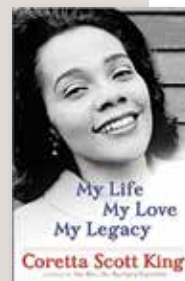
A few songs on this new album speak of interacting with the world and addressing suffering. "Three Feet or So" refers to the possibility of affecting change in the community that directly surrounds us: "I can't change the whole world / But I can change the world I know / What's within three feet or so." Your poems and songs are clearly rooted in a spiritual presence. Tell me about your practice as a Quaker. I'm a practicing unprogrammed Quaker. There is a thread of that which always runs through my work. There's a spiritual part in my work because there's a spiritual part in my life. If it

Continued on Page 43

New & Noteworthy

WOMAN OF VALOR

Coretta Scott King walked alongside her husband Martin Luther King Jr. in the civil rights struggle—and kept on working for social justice after his assassination, until her death in 2006. *My Life, My Love, My Legacy* is her perspective, as told to Barbara Reynolds. Henry Holt



COME TOGETHER

In *Embrace: God's Radical Shalom for a Divided World*, Leroy Barber draws from decades of ministry among diverse people to argue for the centrality of relationships across differences to achieving not just reconciliation, but true justice. Encouraging, openhearted words for divisive times. IVP Books

TESTIFY

Sometimes, liberal Christians feel they need to apologize for the behavior of other Christians or churches. In *Tired of Apologizing for a Church I Don't Belong To: Spirituality without Stereotypes, Religion without Ranting*, writer and pastor Lillian Daniel encourages you instead to boldly tell your own story of faith and sacred relationship. Faith Words



STREET CHURCH

The Revolution Has Come, by Rev. Sekou & The Holy Ghost, was released in early 2016—but its gritty mix of R&B and gospel, freedom and resistance is more relevant every day. Activists/artists Osagyefo Sekou and Jay-Marie Hill met at a Black Lives Matter protest, and street movements permeate the songs. rshgmusic.com

A Nobel Prize for the Masses?

ANY REASONABLE person should admit that Bob Dylan's 54 years as a great American artist deserve some kind of monumental recognition, maybe even a real monument somewhere. But the monumental recognition Dylan received in October from the Nobel Prize committee for literature has generated plenty of argument, much of it among reasonable people. Scottish novelist Irvine Welsh had the best one-liner. "This," he said, "is an ill-conceived nostalgia award wrenched from the rancid prostates of senile, gibbering hippies."

But, generational animosities aside, the most cogent complaint about the Dylan Nobel goes like this: "Sure, most of his music is great. But is it literature?"

And of course it's not. At least not if literature is limited to its dictionary definition as the stuff composed to be read from a page (or, today, a screen). However, in



Bluesmen such as Robert Johnson were inspirations for Bob Dylan.

songs, is the voice of the medicine-show snake oil peddlers and the Appalachian snake-handlers. It's the voice of the slave, or his recent descendant, for whom the rising waters of the Mississippi were a metaphor for his entire life. It is the dirt farmer driven mad by the wails of his hungry children. The Southern poor white committing racist violence as a pawn in the rich man's game. It's the Sunday morning believer and the Saturday night cynic. The oral culture of Dylan's America was raw, unmediated, life on life's terms. And that's the voice we can still hear in the best of his songs.

At this writing, we have no idea whether Dylan will go to Sweden in December to accept his Nobel Prize. But he did accept the 2015 MusiCares Person of the Year Award and gave a long speech in which he explained his work as thoroughly as he ever has.

"I learned lyrics and how to write them from listening to folk songs," Dylan said. "For three or four years ... I went to sleep singing folk songs. I sang them everywhere. ... If you sang 'John Henry' as many times as me ... you'd have

written 'How many roads must a man walk down?' too. ... If you'd listened to Robert Johnson singing, 'Better come in my kitchen, 'cause it's gonna be raining outdoors,' as many times as I listened to it, sometime later you just might write, 'A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall' ... I sang a lot of 'come all you' songs," he continued. "... 'Come along boys and listen to my tale / Tell you of my troubles on the old Chisholm Trail.' Or ... 'Gather 'round, people / A story I will tell / 'Bout Pretty Boy Floyd, the outlaw / Oklahoma knew him well.' If you sung all these 'come all ye' songs all the time like I did, you'd be writing, 'Come gather 'round people where ever you roam, and admit that the waters around you have grown.'"

So, whether they know it or not, when the Nobel committee honors Bob Dylan, they are also honoring the centuries of nameless laborers and wandering minstrels who gave Dylan a voice and something to say.

And these days that'll pass for justice in my book. ■

Danny Duncan Collum teaches writing at Kentucky State University in Frankfort. He is the author of the novel White Boy.



The oral culture of Bob Dylan's America was raw, unmediated, life on life's terms.

announcing Dylan's prize, the Nobel committee dodged that whole question. They didn't call him a "poet." Instead, they honored his "new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition."

I'm not sure exactly what the Nobel committee meant by that cryptic utterance, but it hits pretty close to the heart of Dylan's achievement. At his best Dylan has brought the sensibility, philosophical stance, and rough-hewn sound of what Greil Marcus calls "the old, weird America" into our postmodern era not as archaeological artifact, but as a living tradition.

The voice of the old, weird America, echoing through Dylan's

Continued from Page 41

weren't part of my songs, I would be censoring something very important about how I walk in the world and how I experience my life. But I do try very hard and very intentionally to write in a fashion that is inclusive. The fastest growing spiritual group is "spiritual but not religious," and I think so many people are longing for authentic, real conversations. We are all longing to know what connects us.

Songs like "Three Feet or So," and half of the songs on this album, were written for a spoken word and music collaboration with Parker J. Palmer, another Quaker author and one of my favorite people on the planet. The particular collaboration is called "What We Need Is Here: Hope, Hard Times, and Human Possibility," and it's addressing the idea that comes in "Three Feet or So."

What is your take on how media and technology are affecting us now? While it's easier to find information, many people feel overwhelmed and less informed.

We're getting information from all directions now, and for better or for worse, the bulk of our media is commercial, and we get a lot of what *they* believe will sell. Conflict, crisis, and fear sell, and tragedy becomes a commodity. We're getting an unbalanced view of the world, I believe. It's easy to feel overwhelmed and think, "What can one person do? Is there anything still whole and sacred in the world?"

I say it in the song "Help in Hard Times" that the things that have saved us, the things that have always saved us—as individuals and communities—are still here! Compassion, kindness, hospitality, generosity, and good parenting didn't go away because we're in a particular civil-political season right now. These are completely accessible within us and between us. That's the other news story.

The song "Sanctuary" came out of a conversation with Parker Palmer. I wrote him a letter and asked, "What does a person do when they are personally and politically heartbroken? And how did the folks in the civil rights movement do it? How did they keep going when there were so many setbacks? And tragedy. There was movement forward, too, but how did they keep



Lily Collins, center, in *Rules Don't Apply*

REIMAGINING THE RULES

WARREN BEATTY is an actor who truly deserves to be called a filmmaker. He produced many of his films, and the five that he also co-wrote and/or directed are classics that reimagine their genres.

Heaven Can Wait exchanges predictable alpha masculinity for subtle expressions of the need for companionship; *Dick Tracy* is the most exquisitely designed comic book movie ever made, with Stephen Sondheim songs to boot; and *Bulworth* is a wildly entertaining political satire (a big Hollywood comedy with a Greek chorus played by the political activist poet Amiri Baraka!) that in a parallel universe might have been co-written by Howard Zinn and Michelle Alexander.

Meanwhile, *Reds* is an out-and-out masterpiece—a romantic epic about the rise of communism in the U.S. with a convincing central love affair and dramatization of what building a social movement is actually like.

His latest, *Rules Don't Apply*, appearing after his 15-year screen absence, is original, even magical entertainment. Lily Collins and Alden Ehrenreich perfectly play employees of the reclusive entrepreneur Howard Hughes who fall in love in 1958, despite the "rules" that say they shouldn't. The actress and chauffeur must choose between the money, position, and power offered by Hughes or their forbidden love. Playing Hughes, Beatty invests

him with a kind of vulnerability rare in portrayals of easily caricatured famous people. The psychological complexity that overcame Hughes is handled with sensitivity, and Beatty never lets the performance turn into attention-seeking awards bait or a joke at the expense of a powerful person. Our empathy with some of Hughes' character doesn't erase the part that invites critique: His greed, control issues, and manipulations are here too.

But the film is really about the constrictive rules that affect us all and how to discern those that make sense and are life-giving. *Rules Don't Apply* is a kind of serenity prayer for people caught between twin American obsessions: God grant me the courage to transcend harmful religious puritanism and individualistic expansionism both.

With it, Beatty has made another genre-transcender: a compelling drama, with delicious light touches, that stirs the heart too. This film believes in the mysteries of love and the necessity of forgiveness. Released after such a divisive election, it's also a gift from one of the most important U.S. filmmakers: an invitation to reimagine the rules we live by, especially those that keep us apart. ■

Gareth Higgins is an Irish writer and founder of moviesandmeaning.com and www.irelandretreats.com.



going?” Parker wrote back almost immediately, “Sometimes you just have to take sanctuary.”

That moved and touched me, that idea that sometimes we have to gather with trusted folks—individuals and community—and gather your hope and gather your courage and remember what it is we love beyond words and measure. Then go out and keep trying.

“Lean in Toward the Light” is much more a song of action: If we just keep leaning into something of light and something fine in the world, there is possibility and hope. It’s not positive thinking or wishful thinking. The hope that I talk about on this album is pretty gritty stuff. Where you get up in the morning and you try again in your own way to make the world just a little kinder place, and then the next morning you do it again, and the next morning you get up and you’ve been disappointed and you get up and you do it again. It’s about hope that is faithful. And it’s risky. Because if you hope like that, eventually your heart will be broken and you will need to take sanctuary. And then you get up and you do it again. It’s a horizon line we may never get to, but the walk is so fine.

We may never get to the horizon line, but the walk is so fine.

I’ve always been curious about the balance between action and letting things be as they are, between speaking and silence, obstructing injustice and constructing community. Both serve and need to happen at different times. It’s not an either/or. It’s really both/and. Part of the collaboration I’m working on with Parker, and many of the songs on this album, are working with the liminal space—it’s both/and. It’s within us/between us. It is shadow and it is light. In the song “Help in Hard

Times,” the question is not always “Why?” The question is “What shall we do with this and how shall we walk with this together?”

There’s another song called “You Can Do This Hard Thing.” How many times has someone told me, “Carrie, you can do this hard thing”? The beauty is that it completely acknowledges that what you’re doing is difficult; you may not feel comfortable or confident—this may be a new thing—and at the same time it acknowledges and affirms that everything previous has brought you here. And you have everything you need to take the next step forward and have support for it. Yes, you can do this hard thing. ■

Reviewed by Andrew Wilkes

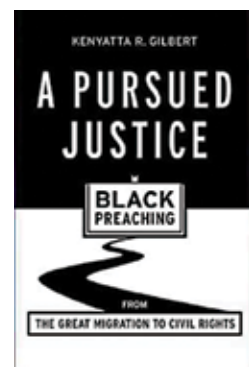
CRAFTING THE PROPHETIC VOICE

***A Pursued Justice: Black Preaching from the Great Migration to Civil Rights*, by Kenyatta R. Gilbert. Baylor University Press.**

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. did not initiate black prophetic preaching; he was, rather, initiated into it. Rev. Kenyatta Gilbert’s *A Pursued Justice: Black Preaching from the Great Migration to Civil Rights* is a theological origin story about the distinctive rhetorical tradition that is black prophetic preaching.

The text begins by naming the social crisis of the Great Migration—shorthand for a massive demographic shift of 1.5 million African Americans from the South to the North between 1916 to 1940—as an essential context for understanding black prophetic preaching. This tradition of Christian proclamation—which Gilbert calls “exodus preaching”—is framed in the context of black pastors seeking to respond theologically to the pressures of injustice, prejudice, and segregation that black migrant workers navigated in Northern urban communities in the inter-war period. Of special note, Gilbert surfaces the social gospel tradition of African-American clerics who, unlike white social gospel leaders Walter Rauschenbusch, Josiah Strong, Washington Gladden, and others, demonstrated a desire to not only build institutional churches that confronted industrial evils but also to address systemic issues of lynching, police brutality, and so on.

While the entire book makes an important contribution to the study and practice of preaching, the third chapter, in particular, sparkles with insight. Within it, Gilbert marshals a solid cast of intellectuals—including Paulo Freire and Zora Neale Hurston—to land on a four-part definition of prophetic preaching. He contends that prophetic



preaching unmasks systemic evil, remains hopeful in difficult situations, aids listeners in naming their own reality, and displays a will to adorn. The criterion of adornment—with patient attention to aesthetic categories of beauty, vision, and desire—is some of the most creative theological writing, in any genre, that you are likely to read. On a practical level, the definition provides a yardstick against which working preachers and homiletics faculty can assess the strength of contemporary pulpit work.

To flesh out this theory of prophetic preaching, Florence Randolph, Adam Clayton Powell Sr., and Reverdy Ransom function as exemplary pastor-prophets within and among African Americans during the period between World War I and World War II. Gilbert accomplishes a deft task of historical reconstruction, making Revs. Randolph, Powell, and Ransom understandable within their era without implying that every preacher within that era embodied the kind of sophisticated approach to preaching that he commends.

Theologically, divine intentionality and interminable hope are twin refrains throughout the book. What emerges from this account is the idea that God's desire for creation is to experience a flowering life of justice, compassion, and the holistic peace that scripture names as shalom. Frequently, perhaps far too frequently, prophetic preaching is envisioned as social critique that identifies injustice convincingly. Gilbert's achievement is to highlight the importance of hope—and the well-crafted language which nurtures such hope—as an essential corrective to the cynicism that surrounds certain forms of contemporary prophetic preaching.

Gilbert's text could be strengthened by making an explicit case for God's goodness and power in view of the strange careers of Jim Crow and racialized industrial capitalism confronting black lives during the inter-war period. In fairness, his insistence

on divine intentionality and the text's juxtaposition of hope and the unmasking of systemic evil implies a recognition that the social crisis of the Great Migration occasions a need for trusting in the goodness and reliability of God's character. Still, questions remain: What are the grounds, for instance, for believing that God has the power to accomplish what God intends? Gilbert, as is clear from the argumentative force of *Pursued Justice*, is able to answer, but he does not offer a sustained argument on the matter.

Reviewed by Elizabeth McAlister

THE WITNESS OF RADICAL WELCOME

The Long Loneliness in Baltimore: Stories Along the Way, by Brendan Walsh, artwork by Willa Bickham. Apprentice House.

IN 1967, I TRAVELED with activist friends from New York to Baltimore to support four people there who poured blood on the 1A files that compelled young men into the military and the massacre in Vietnam. The “Baltimore 4,” as they became known, committed the first of some 100 actions focused on draft boards, the source of cannon fodder in the ever-escalating wars in Indochina. It was during one of these trips that I met Willa Bickham and her husband, Brendan Walsh. Our friendship has been rich, varied, invaluable.

In *The Long Loneliness in Baltimore*, Walsh and Bickham tell of their nearing 50 years serving the people of Baltimore as the Viva House Catholic Worker. It is a story that needs telling, especially now in this country that is profoundly ruptured by economic and racial conflict.

Try as the politicians and the press might, it is impossible to disengage economics from race. Bickham and Walsh know this intimately, living in the midst of an impoverished black neighborhood. They have experienced drugs, murders, robberies, and destruction right outside their front doors. The alley that runs beside their home, thanks to their creativity, is marked with memorials to men and boys shot and killed there. Repeatedly,

This concern notwithstanding, Gilbert's text merits a wide readership in classrooms and congregations. In both form and content, *Pursued Justice* is a breakthrough work of practical theology and rhetorical analysis. If audience reception follows quality of content, it deservedly will enjoy multiple rounds of printing and critical acclaim. ■

Andrew Wilkes is the principal of Wilkes Advocacy Group and an associate pastor at the Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral of New York.



after almost every major killing, Walsh has told the press what has become crystal clear to him: that in Baltimore City (as in too many cities), selling drugs is the *only* job that exists for all-too-many people of color.

In the garden outside Viva House is the Hope Stone. In Bickham's script, it quotes Martin Luther King Jr.: “We will hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.” That is the invitation to all who come to Viva House for whatever reason, to meet whatever need. Each is sure to receive respectful and caring human interaction, food, fellowship, help with bills, a place to escape the cold or heat or rain, a place of justice and peace.

Bickham and Walsh are people of deep faith that is put into practice in their choice of where and how to live and how to welcome people of all faiths, races, colors, and ages into their home. Were this practiced more widely, we might be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation.

I was stunned at how profoundly people who had been part of their lives, and are now deceased, came alive in this book. It enabled me to spend time with Mary Moylan (one of the Catonsville Nine), Jim Harney (an activist and photojournalist), Tom Lewis (one of both the Baltimore Four and the Catonsville

Divine intentionality and interminable hope are twin refrains throughout the book.

Nine), and teacher and activist Bill O'Connor, to name a few of the many. What a gift. Walsh and Bickham understand that death is part of this thing called life. I appreciated that as my own beloved Phil Berrigan was dying; they walked that walk with me, my family, and my immediate community, sharing the grief and loss as well as helping us all open ourselves to the reality of death.

There's a compelling immediacy to Walsh's writing. It's a matter of heart combined with head, of profound belief in and love for those about whom he is writing; it's a matter of art; and, reductively, it's a matter of faith and hope and love. Bickham's art

is stunningly beautiful, consistent with the outpouring of her compassion with the people she serves and loves.

I rejoice in the people that Walsh and Bickham are, the service they do daily, the model they continue to be for so many of us, the fidelity. What gifts they and Viva House are and have been all these years to untold numbers of people. And what a gift this book will be to all who take time with it. ■

Elizabeth McAlister was a founding member of Jonah House, a Catholic resistance community in Baltimore. She now lives in New York City.

Reviewed by Richard K. Taylor

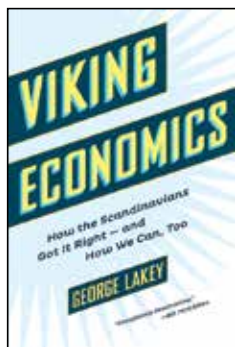
A NOT-SO-IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

Viking Economics: How the Scandinavians Got It Right—And How We Can, Too,
by George Lakey. Melville House.

WHAT WOULD IT be like here in the United States if our society were more like Scandinavia? Well, our children and grandchildren would be able to get free, high-quality education from preschool through college. They, and every other U.S. citizen, could get good, free medical care. They would be guaranteed a 40-hour workweek and at minimum a month's paid vacation. Should they lose their job, they could count on comprehensive support through the nation's elaborate social safety net, including job retraining and, if needed, help with relocation. At retirement, they would be guaranteed a pension providing basic security, regardless of previous earnings or contributions they'd paid in.

They probably would be unionized. The board of directors of any business they worked for, by law, would be at least 40 percent women. If the U.S. government had become like Sweden's, our president's cabinet would have an equal number of women and men.

George Lakey, author of *Viking Economics*, does not believe that Scandinavian countries are utopias—he points out mistakes they've made and the challenges



they still face (for example, fervent debates over immigration policy). But he does make and support the dramatic claim that the four countries mentioned in his book—Sweden, Norway, Iceland, and Denmark—“have created the clearest sustained model of democracy, equality, environmental justice, shared prosperity, and individual freedom in history.”

In this scholarly but easy-to-read book, laced with humor and intriguing stories, you'll learn how change-minded Scandinavians, frequently facing determined—sometimes violent—opposition, used effective and creative nonviolent methods (including strikes, boycotts, street demonstrations, study circles, and thousands of co-ops) to organize the powerful grassroots movements and political parties that built such exemplary societies.

The most eye-opening information, at least for U.S. readers, will be the realization

that Nordic countries were not always so exemplary.

“Oh sure,” skeptics will scoff, “when you have small, homogeneous societies like theirs, it's a lot easier to agree on positive social changes than, say, in a larger and more racially diverse and contentious country such as the U.S.”

“Wrong!” says *Viking Economics*. A century ago, Lakey explains, an economic elite ran each Nordic country. There was extensive poverty, lack of work, an enormous gap between rich and poor, even famines. To escape these conditions, Scandinavians emigrated to the U.S. in massive numbers: 1 million Swedes (1868-1914), 800,000 Norwegians (1825-1925), and 300,000 Danes (1820-1920).

It took many years of struggle and the kind of organizing described above to create the admirable societies we see today. While acknowledging the limitations of comparisons, Lakey argues that we could do the same. The book is sprinkled with dozens of how-to-do-it ideas on this crucial subject.

Most recently a professor at Swarthmore College, Lakey is one of the world's leading interpreters of the power of nonviolent direct action and campaign-building. He has led 1,500 workshops on five continents on the topic. But he is known just as much as an activist, helping to create organizations to address issues of peace, justice, basic social change, and environmental sanity. He has participated in hundreds of nonviolent campaigns to address these and other issues. (I have known Lakey for more than 50 years. Our common Quaker faith first brought us together, often in peace demonstrations, some of which led to sharing a jail cell.)

We would do well to study, discuss, and learn from *Viking Economics*—and to try the book's ideas in our own campaigns to forge an American social, political, and economic system that better reflects biblical values of human dignity, social justice, and the common good. ■

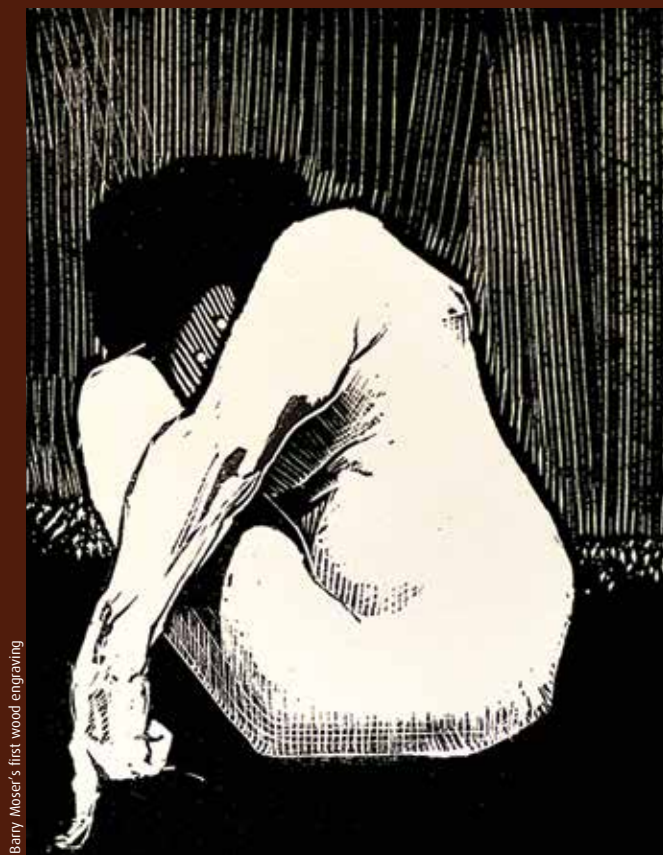
Richard K. Taylor, a self-described “Quatholic,” draws nurture from both his Quaker roots and his more recently blossomed Catholic faith. He has authored 12 books, including his most recent, Nonviolent Direct Action as a Spiritual Path.

The most eye-opening information, at least for U.S. readers, will be the realization that Nordic countries were not always so exemplary.

Hunger

Wedge in the crevices
of each day
there is terror
and everywhere
fresh pieces of communion
go uneaten.

*Helen Mirkil is a poet and artist
living in Lansdale, Pa.*



Barry Moser's first wood engraving

The Light Dawns Slowly

GIVEN THAT WE'VE ALL just had a face full of Christmas lights, most folks would be surprised to learn that in the church, Epiphany is traditionally the season of light (not lights—you can put them away). Epiphany is designed to put us in the position of those who first met Jesus on whom light slowly dawns. What? You mean the carpenter's son, Mary's boy? He's the one to redeem Israel and bring justice to every last human being on earth?! There is so much light here it is hard to see all at once. Epiphany acts as a light dimmer, waiting for our eyes to adjust, trying to keep us only slightly uncomfortable, but not overwhelmed.

Some churches have a practice of announcing a sermon series for January that can attract new people—something on sex or politics, for example. Advertise it at Christmas and then deliver with your best in the new year. That's when folks are open to new things, and best of all for us, God illumines us at Epiphany. Learning who God is throws light on who our neighbor is—one in whom divine light shines, who is therefore endlessly deserving of our respect and adoration.

Embrace Church in Sioux Falls, S.D., talks about money in January. It seems suicidal.



But folks are financially hungover from the holidays, and need help. And the gospel's words about money are good news all the time, not just in "stewardship season" or at the year-end budget rush.

Jason Byassee holds the Butler chair in homiletics and biblical hermeneutics at Vancouver School of Theology in British Columbia.

[JANUARY 1]

All Rachel's Children

Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148; Hebrews 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-23

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS don't often last. They are born in good intentions, but we are weak, fragile creatures, and habits are hard things to break.

This is why God becomes everything we are, to make us everything God is.

These passages' commonality is the presence of angels. Ancient Christians and Jews were convinced that creation is crammed with far more creatures than the eye can see. The psalmist plays cosmic choirmaster, commanding the angels to praise. An angel appears to Joseph to protect his precarious holy family. But angels are lamentably absent before the Slaughter of the Innocents, leaving Rachel without consolation.

We can see desolate mothers of all kinds here. Conservatives see it in our abortion industry; liberals in refugee mothers and mothers of lost brown and black sons in America. Both are correct. Where are those helpful intervening angels again?!

God came as a person, not an angel. Some say Satan objected to God becoming a weak human instead of a magnificent angel.

Hebrews makes clear God became a person to suffer, and so to redeem. Angels are spectacular, comforting. But God couldn't save us as an angel—only as one of Eve's children, Mary's only son, to save all of Rachel's lost children and all the rest of us.

[JANUARY 8]

Lord of All

Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17

A RENEWAL OF baptismal vows where everyone gets wet is ideal for the Sunday of Jesus' baptism. But if you're tired of a Jesus' baptism sermon each year, there are endless other riches here.

Reflect instead on the Messiah's character according to Isaiah. He's tender, gentle, and yet the God who made everything and everyone gives him as a covenant with us and all people. The psalmist says God's voice smashes trees, throws off sparks, and,

most miraculous of all, makes even mutes like us cry "glory." And then there's Peter's sermon.

It can be a moralistic trap to say that God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34). The gospel is not that God is nice so that we should be nice too. It's that God chooses one people, Israel, through whom to bless everyone else. Peter realizes that now is the "everyone else" time. Yet light dawns slowly. His hosts first try to worship him. He says Jews don't normally mix with Gentiles. Amy-Jill Levine's *Jewish Annotated New Testament* argues that Jews and Gentiles weren't so neatly divided as that, but hey, light is dawning slowly. Peter's sermon says too much, but our sermons have to focus. Choose one arresting phrase—he's Lord of all, not some. His nature is to free the oppressed. They hanged him; God raised him. We ate and drank with a resurrected man.

Each of these is the whole church in a single bite, a single drop of water.

[JANUARY 15]

Thick Living Words

Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42

EVER FELT LIKE your preaching was worthless? I had a preacher friend complain to me that his listeners were like deaf and mute tree stumps, for all the listening they did.

The Bible gets it. Isaiah complains that he preaches in vain. This even though Isaiah was chosen in the womb, and the prophet's word is like a sharp sword or arrow. God has to talk him down—surely it's reward enough to be God's servant? And anyway, take heart. Though you're abhorred now, like a slave, one day kings will bow to you. In Epiphany we remember kings already have bowed—to Jesus, whose own words mostly fell to the ground. By human standards of accounting, anyway.

For the discouraged, St. John offers a mini-primer on preaching. John calls Jesus the "Lamb of God," and listeners with nothing better to do mosey after him. They ask him a doozy of a question: "Where are you staying?" (Really? Is that the best you could do?) Jesus replies, as he often does in John,

“Come and see.” In John, things are not just as they seem. The word translated “stay,” as in a hotel room, can also mean “remain,” “dwell,” “abide.” Jesus, John will later tell us, abides with his Father, and also with us, like a vine and branches. No wonder preaching is hard. This word is thick, mysterious. But there is nourishment in this soil, life in these tree stumps, abundance in this strange dwelling place.

[JANUARY 22]

Factions Are Forever

Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9;
1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23

ON JAN. 20, we'll inaugurate a new U.S. president. From where I sit writing pre-election, both candidates face historic levels of antipathy. On Jan. 20, half our populace will be revolted, the other half perhaps relieved, but not likely ecstatic.

Isaiah had much higher hopes for the new king in his prophecy. Probably Hezekiah, this king would take back the his-

God becomes everything we are, to make us everything God is.

toric lands of Zebulun and Naphtali lost to Tiglath-Pileser's invasion in 733-32 BCE. He would, to coin a phrase, make Israel great again.

But then the church does something strange. We attribute this prophecy in Isaiah 9 to Jesus' peculiar way of making Israel, and the world, great. Matthew 4 describes Jesus' decision to move in to a fishing village by the coast as a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. His call to fisher folk to follow is quite a different reconquest than Isaiah might have imagined. His ministry of preaching and healing disease and casting out demons doesn't reclaim territory for a king so much as it shows God's intention to cure the world.

There will always be factions among us. Just look at Hillary and Donald, and Chloe's report of divisions in Corinth—Paul and Apollos and Cephas and Christ (top that!). Corinthians baptized by Paul are no better than those baptized by anybody else. Paul

was not crucified for them and Christ is not divided by them. The foolishness of the cross is the power of God to save.

That's a worthy word for a bitterly divided people, then and now.

[JANUARY 29]

Heroic Sacrifice?

Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31;
Matthew 5:1-12

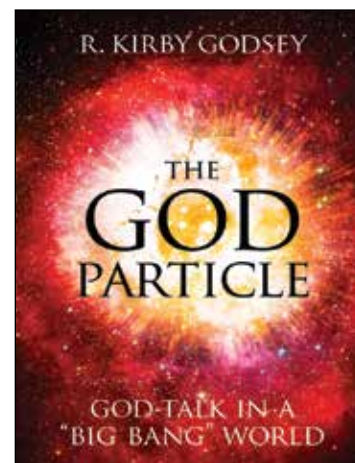
A FRIEND TELLS a story of being outside a nuclear missile site, candle in hand, protesting alone except for the guard. “Why are you doing this? It won't change anyone's mind.” He replied, “I'm not doing this to change anybody else. I'm doing it to change me.”

The Sermon on the Mount is perhaps Jesus' most quoted and least heeded teaching. It is easy to pillory—in Monty Python's *Life of Brian*, his hearers think he blesses the “cheesemakers.” It's easier to make jokes or debate these beatitudes than it is to practice being poor, meek, hungry for righteousness, pure in heart, or reviled. Western middle-class discomfort notwithstanding, Jesus tells the wretched of the earth that they are, in fact, blessed. Jesus is not pleading. He's just saying the way things are.

It's almost too much to have two all-time-favorite social justice passages on the same Sunday. Micah describes a plaintive God, whining almost—what more do I need to do, Israel? I sent you liberators and miracles and laws. Do I want heroic sacrifice? No! Just justice and kindness and humble walking with God. Paul is equally unflattering: Consider your own status Corinthians! I mean, y'all were not impressive. But God chose *you*. Foolish right? And maybe most foolish of all—the psalmist praises those who don't lend money at interest. Good luck with that, capitalists.

With material like this it's no wonder preaching is so difficult. It's a miracle anybody believes it at all. Hand me a candle. ■

“Preaching the Word,” Sojourners' online resource for sermon preparation and Bible study, is available at sojo.net/ptw.



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Thanksgiving (without the thanks part)

WELL, WE'RE glad *that* Thanksgiving is over. So much tension, just under the surface, which occasionally roared above the special lace tablecloth. "You're carving a beautiful turkey, Aunt Edna. It's too bad you cut the heart out of democracy when you voted for that buffoon. Could I have some more sweet potatoes, please?"

Or: "That's the best pecan pie I've ever eaten, Sis. It helps take out the bitter taste of your voting to plunge this nation into a dark abyss of fear. Ooh, is that whipped cream!?"

It was probably okay in some households. Muslim Americans had no problems passing the green beans without mumbled criticisms of a relative's recent vote. Jewish families, confident in their rela-

Awkward...

tive political unanimity, doubtless had a tension-free celebration. And most families of color could enjoy each other with minimal strain. ("Cousin Bob, bringing something from Chipotle is *not* appropriate for the Thanksgiving potluck. But you're family, so it's okay. Now let's give thanks to God, who was totally not paying attention on Nov. 8.")

WHITE EVANGELICALS had the toughest time, especially in families with mixed marriages ("You married a Catholic, but I still love you, and maybe even her, at some point in the future."), and the inevitable presence of relatives with divergent political views

Saying grace was the hardest part of the meal, when liberal family members peeked accusingly at their cousins, whose eyes were closed in pious gratitude that their guns were safe and that energy companies can finally mine the coal under our national parks. They were also giving thanks for more excessive military



spending, cutting taxes for the rich, and turning over women's reproductive rights to the authority of aged white men on Capitol Hill, as is their constitutional right. At least, this is what the progressives *assumed* their kinfolk were praying for. You can't really tell, of course, because most people's eyes were closed, a classic mistake at family gatherings when you've got to mentally calculate if there'll be enough white meat for seconds. Or if you should save room for dessert. (Kidding. This is America. We'll have it all.)

VISITING THE relatives is almost always a test of civility when politics is introduced into the conversation. Every year we promise ourselves not to bring it up, to instead focus on the young children, to inquire about recent household improvements, and to talk at length with the aging relatives. But then grandpa says he heard on *Fox & Friends* that poor people shouldn't have refrigerators and that President Obama met with a pirate (actual F&F items), outrages that must be addressed and forcefully corrected. And all that before you even take off your coat.

But it's Thanksgiving, or Christmas, or maybe a hastily-planned wedding for a young couple told by their church to rely on abstinence only (but they forgot), and this is your family. Yes, these are people with whom you would never associate under normal circumstances, except for that

nasty accident of your birth.

So, for the sake of harmony, you don't mention that both your daughters woke up sobbing on Nov. 9. You don't point out that formerly disgraced politicians are now being considered for major cabinet positions, including Newt Gingrich, who I feel would better serve the nation as a department-store Santa. You don't speak loudly and with incredulity in your brother's living room that Rudy Giuliani, who could be our next secretary of state, just announced with a straight face—albeit a face that looks like a hastily carved pumpkin—that he changed his status on Facebook to "Best Friendsies" with Vladimir Putin.

Nor do you mention that Sarah Palin is being considered for Secretary of the Interior, something they would wholeheartedly endorse without a hint of full-body shuddering.

Nope. When they go low, you go high, preferably by standing on a footstool and loudly reminding these Bible-believing Christians who see everything as "God's will"—including finding a good parking spot at the gun show—that in the previous two presidential elections, they finally had the candidate they'd been praying for: a Bible-believing, born-again, church-going Christian. And they didn't vote for him.

And in this latest election, instead of supporting a hard-working woman raised on traditional Methodist values, they voted enthusiastically for—wait for it—the least qualified person ever to run for the presidency.

But you don't do that. Because they're family, and they're calling you in for dinner. And it smells *really* good. ■

Ed Spivey Jr. is art director of Sojourners.



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